



Window on Jordan

By Ghassan Joha

Special to The Star
TRY TO open a newspaper one morning on the "vacancies" pages. There is always a column for "secretaries wanted," asking for certain women: Jordanian, young, creative and practical; years of experience and (more often than not) single. You may find other conditions but in most cases, these ads shy away from requiring male secretaries.

The secretary's job goes back to the scribes of antiquity. The Romans gave it a name—*Secretarius*—Keeper of secrets. The manufacturing of the first practical typewriter, and the two World Wars brought women into the secretarial field and

formed the prototype of today's secretary. It was soon discovered that women took to clerical work quite well and became firmly established. This gave them fresh impetus to use their abilities.

"Now, women are not only accepted but actually dominate the secretarial field," Dr. Mousa Shteiwi, from the Department of Sociology in the University of Jordan told *The Star*.

Here in Jordan, the position itself isn't that old, becoming traditional because of social and economic factors and unemployment. "We can call this phenomenon as a support system that the society really needs," added Dr. Shteiwi. "This kind of job is an appropriate one for women as a result of its impor-

tance in public relations." The moment that a woman becomes a secretary, she comes to have numerous tasks including external activities, she becomes apart from the working area but still relates to it.

"Many institutions today prepare women effectively to face the excessive tasks that any secretary can have in her career," Dr. Shteiwi said.

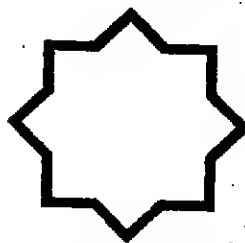
"Working women are better needed to improve the workload in any business. With her upgrading abilities and requirements, the executive secretary can run a whole company and administer it with limited powers, of course." And that seems true.

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...really can't speak right now. I have tons of paper work to do.



The Star



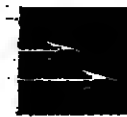
Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly



Le Jourdain
Supplément en français du Star

● Réfugiés mais accros à leur école
● Noël en Jordanie : les enfants font la loi

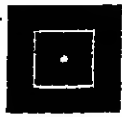
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اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

Popular sentiments high over visit by two deputies to Knesset

By Raed Al Abed

Star Staff Writer
EVEN IN the peace era the Jordan Communist Party (JCP) refused to invite its Israeli counterpart to its second conference held in Amman last week to avoid accusations of normalization with Israel. This is despite the historical relations between both parties.

But as the Communists were meeting, Thursday, an Islamic fundamentalist figure who won an outright victory in the last parliamentary elections defied all logic and visited the Israeli Knesset.

The unprecedented visit by two Jordanian legislators—Sheikh Mohammad Ra'fat and Hamadeh Faraneh—created a wave of anger among the residents of the Baqa'a camp. Baqa'a, home to 150,000 Palestinians, is the largest refugee camp in the Kingdom.

Sheikh Ra'fat, who received more than 8000 votes, was the most popular figure in Baqa'a. He ran on an anti-normalization ticket and during his campaign he promised to bring down the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty. However last Thursday he shocked the public by his visit to the Israeli Knesset and his talks with the Knesset Speaker.

Political analysts were particularly astonished because of the past history of Ra'fat. The sheikh is considered one of the leading fundamentalists, a Salafist who does not recognize regimes which don't practice the rule of Islam. In the past he vehemently rejected any cooperation with "non Muslim" governments, including the regime in Jordan.

The former member of the Muslim Brotherhood was a fiery preacher in the Muslim-dominated camp. During his Friday sermons his focus was on the necessity for Jihad (holy war) to liberate Palestine from the River to the Sea.



Ra'fat shakes hands with Israeli Knesset speaker, Dan Tichon during his visit there last week. Tichon presented the Sheikh with a miniature model of the Knesset. Faraneh stands in the background.

He also accused Arab regimes of not ruling by the Islamic Sharia. And to this respect, he strongly criticized those Islamists who became members of parliament.

"I apologize to all those who listened to me and elected Sheikh Ra'fat," said his elections campaign manager, Mr. Khalid Erar.

Another Ra'fat's supporter expressed his shock over the visit. He said that "something had gone wrong, he either cheated us or we were fooled," said Jamal Joma'a, 32. "Everybody loves the man, why he visited the enemies, is something we cannot understand."

However, an old man sitting in front of his store reacted coolly: "What's wrong with the visit, I trust the sheikh, he visited Palestine," said Abu Jamal, 52. "I wish I can visit Palestine."

However, both the public and the press expressed their

dismay. On the whole, they ignored Faraneh, who is known for his dealings with Israeli figures and institu-

tions, and who enjoys strong relations with the Palestinians inside Israel. For instance, Faraneh was the first Jorda-

nian journalist to give an interview to the Israeli radio, and he helped out the Arab Democratic Party in its campaign during the Israeli elections last year.

The visit, according to Faraneh, came as an invitation from the Arab legislators in the Knesset. He denied Israeli reports claiming that Faraneh and Sheikh Ra'fat handed an invitation to Knesset Speaker Dan Tichon to visit the Jordanian Parliament.

Today, a police car stands guard outside Sheikh Ra'fat's house in Baqa'a camp. Neighbors denied that violent actions had taken place in the last few days to protest the visit.

Ra'fat's young son said things are normal and that camp residents treat him and his brothers as usual and are always asking about their father.

On his part, Sheikh Ra'fat did not consider his visit as normalizing "with the enemy", but said that he visited his homeland, Palestine, and he is still steadfast in his

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Israeli growth in West Bank escalating

By James Rupert

OFRA, OCCUPIED West Bank—Under a gray, cold drizzle, a half-dozen concrete-sprattered laborers worked on the foundation of one of dozens of new homes sprouting on a stony ridge at the edge of this Jewish settlement.

A mile away, settlement secretary Yona Hoffman sat in an office lined with maps showing how Ofra, a village of perhaps 2,000 people, is meant to grow into a city of about 40,000.

"We're completing 50 homes, and starting 24 new ones," Hoffman said. "We need to grow."

After years in which Israel froze most settlement construction in occupied Arab lands, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu this year is encouraging a surge of Jewish home building. The government doesn't say how many new homes and apartments are going up. But in recent months it has approved contracts to

build more than 16,000 units just in settlements near Jerusalem, according to official figures gathered by the Israeli monitoring group Peace

Now Netanyahu says he is allowing settlements to accommodate their populations "natural growth." But independent surveys suggest that settlement construction is outpacing population growth and that significant numbers of homes are vacant.

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'Carlos the Jackal' is found guilty in trial he denounces

By John-Thor Dahlburg

PARIS—Given a last chance to explain himself in court, "Carlos the Jackal," the erstwhile globe-trotting terrorist nabbed by the French nearly 3 years ago, launched into a long, rambling monologue Tuesday night, lashing out at "world Zionism" and the influence of McDonald's. The judges and jury were unimpressed. They deliberated and early Wednesday pronounced Carlos guilty of a triple murder in Paris in 1975, sentencing him to spend the rest of his life in a French prison.

The graying, Venezuelan-born leftist, 48, whose real name is Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, had had no illusions as to the outcome. "Personally, the verdict is secondary for me. I am a revolutionary combatant who recognizes neither the verdict nor the authority of this court," he said earlier in the day. Carlos was convicted of gunning down two unarmed French counterintelligence officers and a Lebanese colleague turned informer who came to an apartment hideout on the Left Bank of Paris while investigating rocket attacks on Israeli airliners at Orly airport.

The defendant denounced the trial as a "masquerade," and his lead attorney, Isabelle Coutant Peyre, warned jurors not to sacrifice her client to suit what she called American and Israeli interests. In the nine-day proceeding, Carlos was bombastic and charming, filled with hatred and friendly. He egged women jurors, accused Israeli agents of being behind the murders he was accused of, interrupted proceedings to contest points of detail and recounted anecdotes that seemed to miss the point.

In a confused speech that lasted for almost four hours, the nattily dressed South American spoke fervently on behalf of the Palestinian cause, branded Israel "the first terrorist state in history" and spoke of "world war, war to the death, the war that humanity must win against McDonald-ization."

Stung by accusations that he had become nothing but a mercenary in the pay of former East bloc governments and Arab nations like Syria, Carlos protested, "when one wages war for 30 years, there is a lot of blood spilled—mine and others'. But we never killed anyone—for money but for a cause—the liberation of Palestine." For more than two decades, Carlos was on the run before being captured in August 1994 by French police in Sudan, dumped in a sack and flown to France for trial.

In this country alone, he could face as many as five more trials for terrorist bombings that he is believed to have masterminded or carried out and which killed 14 people. But it is in Austria that he



Carlos

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Gulf states begin to open bank market

By Roula Khalaf

BEIRUT—The decision this week by the Gulf Cooperation Council to allow national banks to set up branches in each other's countries is a first step towards banking liberalization. It could also help efforts by banks to expand.

The move could open up the large Saudi and Kuwaiti banking markets to other Gulf banks. The Saudi banking sector, with \$75 billion in assets, is the biggest in the Arab world, but foreign banks are only allowed to operate in a few branches with local banks.

"These banks are as big as they can be in local markets, and they need to expand more aggressively abroad," said John Payne, an analyst at Limassol-based Capital Intelligence.

After over-expanding during the oil boom, several banks in the late 1980s were laden with bad debts. "We are only beginning on and the banks are now trying to find a way to survive in economies which are still closed," said an analyst. "Their biggest problem today is that they cannot find enough."

At a recent financial conference in Beirut, bankers discussed the need for a regional financial institution.

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Christmas in the Jerusalem is a hollow holiday

By Rebecca Trounson

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM—Kevin McInerney and Graham Crowe stood braced against a chilly wind outside the vast Church of the Holy Sepulcher, looking wistful. It was just a few days before Christmas in this city so holy to Christians around the world, but there was hardly a sign of the blessed event, the young Irishmen ooted glumly. No

holiday lights or decorations, no Christmas music on the radio, and only a small artificial tree in the lobby of their East Jerusalem hotel. "It's hard for us to believe it's actually Christmas," said McInerney, 21, who was visiting Jerusalem with Crowe and other soldiers on a brief leave from their duties with the UN force in Lebanon. "It's a very big time of year for us at home, but you hardly feel it at all around here."

Such is the elusive nature of Christmas in the Holy Land, an all but forgotten holiday in a Jewish state where Christians make up less than 3 percent of the population. While the atmosphere in American and European cities is full of holiday cheer at this time of year, public reminders of Christmas are nearly nonexistent and can even be oddly incongruous in the

land where tradition holds that it all began. There are positive aspects to this situation. Unexposed to the intensely commercial aspects of Christmas elsewhere, children are less likely to beg for advertised toys. The aisles at Tel Aviv's Toys 'R' Us, unlike those in its sister stores almost anywhere else, are remarkably empty in the days before Christmas. And each year, the Jewish National Fund gives

away Christmas trees—typically spindly pines akin to Charlie Brown's, but trees nonetheless—to resident Christians.

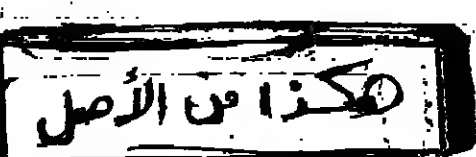
Inside the many churches in Israel that mark sites sacred to Christians, the faithful celebrate the holiday with services, songs and prayers made the more meaningful by the fact that they are taking place here. But for the less observant Christian, who may rely on tinny jingles, stockings in store windows and brightly lit streets to stir that Christmas feeling, the season can be a trifle lonely.

Last week, an American woman stood gazing at red and green ornaments, candles and wrapping paper inside one of the few stores that sells such items in Jerusalem's Old City. "I'm not really shopping," she confided. "I just like coming in here to look at all the Christmas things. You start to miss them here."

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A lady chats to Santa Claus in Bethlehem



The labors of a secretary never ends, or so they say!

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Today, many educational institutions provide a general curriculum for a wide range of courses in the secretarial field. These range from typing (in Arabic and English), shorthand and accounting to office management and computer studies. In this respect also, there are people who just want the general principles of secretarial work, that includes typing and shorthand and those who pass the *Tawjihi* and want to take up secretarial work as a career.

Tawjihi. So after much quarrel he accepted." She said that a secretary has a very important role in any corporation. "She is always needed." The same happened to Sylvia, a colleague of Amal in the class. "From the start I wanted to become a secretary because of the demand and also because of the unemployment situation in Jordan." She added that she is already focusing her attention on banks and big companies.

But, what about those who are already working. Sawvan, in her early 20s, is an executive secretary in one of the prominent companies in West Amman which began working last year. "At first, I had problems because of the overload; this made me bad-tempered. But now, after one year, I love my work." She confirmed that her salary is now double. She

did say also that she was subjected to some kind of harassment, didn't elaborate, and said it was cleared up now. The issue of harassment and abuse could happen in a situation where men and women work together. "There must be effective legislations in our country which preserve the working rights of women and prevent any kind of exploitation of them," Dr. Shiehi added. These legislations can't be effective unless they give full, just and protective rights to every working woman. "These rights must include salaries, working conditions and working hours."

The secretary may have to work very closely with her manager, and may create a situation that could compromise her work. Dr. Shiehi pointed out. That is why parliament, trade and professional unions and NGOs need to work together to legitimize the working rights for women, the academic continued. "Today managers and businessmen accept the idea of a working woman. But most are still not willing to grant them rights in the workplace."

It's our duty and demand to force them by law to believe in and agree to such rights," Dr. Shiehi concluded. "The better the woman is educated, the wiser she becomes to her rights."

Yet for others, economic necessity maybe overwhelming. Rasha Fayez, failed in her *Tawjihi* exams this year and joined up to study secretarial work. "I decided to study this to help my family." She is living with her parents and her father is a pensioner. ■



Part of the 12 days activities before Christmas, an Inter-Continental team visits the SOS village. The team was headed by Mrs. Soper, wife of the Hotel's General Manager and the Public Relations Director, Ms. Aslou. They passed by the 12 homes in the village to wish everybody Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and thanked the Mothers of these homes for the superb care and attention given to the children.

Gulf states begin to open bank market

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cussed plans to create a new private sector Arab institution with \$500 million in capital to finance trade and investment in the region. Huge projects, for private sector development, are planned. They include big gas developments in Oman and Qatar, petrochemicals expansion in Saudi Arabia, aluminium production in Bahrain, and new or expanded industrial zones in the United Arab Emirates. Infrastructure requirements alone are estimated at \$65 billion-\$165 billion over the next decade for the Middle East and North Africa region.

"The first stage of Saudi industrialization was entirely financed by the state," said Andrew Cunningham, analyst at Moody's, giving one example. "Now we are seeing a second stage and it is being financed by the private sector. Banks are expected to play their parts in this."

Allowing banks to set up branches across GCC countries is likely to put pressure on small banks, accelerating mergers. Arab bankers say many countries have too many small, poorly capitalized banks, which will face difficulties as domestic markets become more open to foreign competition and governments sign up to global free trade agreements. Half the assets in the Arab banking sector are held by 20 per cent of the 300 banks.

Merger activity seems to have picked up in Oman, after consolidation was encouraged by the central bank. The first bank merger in Saudi Arabia was announced in September. It was the work of Prince Al Waleed bin Talal, the international investor and nephew of Saudi Arabia's King Fahd. The United Saudi Commercial Bank, controlled by the prince, merged with Saudi Cairo bank, creating the kingdom's third biggest bank.

Elsewhere in the Arab world the merger trend has gathered pace. Lebanon's overbanked market saw this month the merger of Byblos Bank with Bank Beyrouth pour le Commerce, making the new institution the fourth largest in the country. ■

Financial Times Syndication

Israeli growth in West Bank escalating

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The Clinton administration has asked Netanyahu for a "time-out" on construction, saying settlements complicate peace-making. Each new home represents a physical and political anchor for Israel on land that, according to peace agreements, is supposed to be up for negotiation in a final peace deal.

Palestinians, as well as many Israelis and foreign governments, condemn the expansion as an effort by Netanyahu's government to pre-empt negotiations. "It is a systematic, stepped-up campaign to confiscate more land," said Hanan Ashrawi, a Palestinian National Authority government minister, in a recent interview. "They will build enough settlements to fill the West Bank with Israelis, and then there won't be a need for final-status negotiations."

Netanyahu, who draws essential political support from the estimated 150,000 West Bank settlers, denies that the expansion is an obstacle to peace-making and says it is not prohibited by the peace accords signed at Oslo.

The government has resumed construction gradually, perhaps because of budget constraints, but also to avoid a violent response, said Amrith Goldblum, who monitors settlements for the Israeli group Peace Now, which opposes settlement construction. "A high-profile move would cause an explosion" among Palestinians, he said, as it did last March, when Netanyahu announced the start of work on Har Homa, a new Jewish neighborhood for 40,000 to be set in largely Arab-populated East Jerusalem.

After Israel captured the West Bank from Jordan in the 1967 30-day war, hardline Israelis began building settlements amid the hostile Arab population to claim the territory as part of Israel. Now, 144 fenced and guarded settlements dot the rocky hills and valleys. Most are small villages, although some comprise a



Israeli settlements sprout again in occupied lands

dozen or so people living in trailers, and others are towns of as many as 20,000 people.

Making the beginnings of peace in 1993, Israel and the Palestinians agreed to settle who gets what land in the final stage of negotiations. Israel's Labor Party governments froze much of the settlement construction, although they let it continue where it appeared likely that the land eventually would go to Israel. Israeli and foreign analysts say.

Netanyahu's government has unfrozen old projects and expanded incentives for Jewish settlement to cover all of the West Bank. Settlers can get an income-tax break of 7 percent or more, plus housing loans of \$14,000 and subsidies for schools.

In August, a Peace Now survey of 120 settlements found 4,700 houses or apartments under construction—and this month, the Associated Press reported 7,500 units being built in 65 settlements. Such construction, enough for 20,000 to 30,000 residents, suggests housing expansion of 10 percent or more per year—"well beyond natural growth" of settler populations, which is "5 percent annually as an absolute maximum," said Goldblum.

US officials say a US government study last spring reported significant vacancies in the settlements, and Peace Now reported 3,200 vacant homes in its August survey.

Netanyahu's spokesman, David Bar-Ilan, denied that the government is taking over new land for settlements, but Palestinians and Peace Now said settlers frequently do so by establishing distant "extensions" to existing settlements. "They might put three or four mobile homes out" on a hilltop and begin building permanent homes, said Goldblum.

The degree to which settlement expansion obstructs a peace accord depends partly on where it takes place. Settlements along the West Bank's border with Israel might be conceded more easily by the Palestinians in negotiations.

According to Jerome Segal, a University of Maryland professor and prominent analyst of the peace process, particularly troubling are settlements in the middle of the West Bank, where Israeli control would break Palestinian territory into non-contiguous chunks; and those that would seal off East Jerusalem, which the Palestinians claim as their capital, from the rest of the West Bank. Israel has claimed sovereignty over East Jerusalem, a move unrecognized by the international community.

Ofra is one of those settlements. It sits on the rough spine of rocky ridges that run up the center of the West Bank. Behind its fences, a few hundred small houses nestle amid gardens.

Gabriel Biton, 30, who runs Ofra's only restaurant out of a pair of trailers, said 81 percent of the residents "have come because of ideology"—the conviction that Jews must live on the land that formed biblical Israel.

Inside their fences, Ofra's people are tightly knit and secure. Cars and houses are unlocked and everyone knows each other.

But Ofra sits barely three miles north of Ramallah and Al Bireh, twin Palestinian towns that now are home to most of the Palestinian National Authority's government. Ofra residents regularly are attacked with rocks, and have been shot at when they drive outside the settlement. For all the beauty of the surrounding hills, residents say they can't walk there without guns.

In Israeli cabinet debates this month, Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai presented a map of West Bank lands that Israel says it must keep for security reasons—and Israeli press accounts said Ofra was not on it. That, and US pressure on Israel to pull back from more land in compliance with the peace accords, has raised "a lot of concern" in Ofra "that the army will leave this area and the Palestinian police will have control," said Hoffman.

That prospect turns Hoffman's talk of the future dark. "Every time we would come or go (from Ofra), we would need an armed escort," he said. "But Ofra will stay, even if it costs us casualties every day." ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Popular sentiments high over visit by two deputies to Knesset

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stand towards "the Jews who occupied Palestine, that they are still enemies as long as they continue to rape Palestinian rights." He considered the visit as "an Islamic duty since he visited Jerusalem and Al Aqsa."

Sheikh Ra'fat revealed that his brother, Saleh Ra'fat, the general secretary of the Feda Party in the Palestinian self-rule areas, failed to get him permission to visit Palestine, while "Faraneh succeeded in issuing him with a visa in few minutes."

Many popular sectors have accused Faraneh of exploiting an interview published by a local daily newspaper, earlier this month, where Sheikh Ra'fat said he does not mind a visit to the Israeli Knesset.

However, Ra'fat said his visit to the Knesset was not on the agenda, but something spontaneous. The Jerusalem Post, Israeli English daily, published a picture of the Knesset speaker receiving a gift

from Sheikh Ra'fat. However, the latter denied giving any gifts. "On the contrary," he said the Knesset Speaker was the one who gave him a miniature model of the Knesset.

In its Sunday session, discussion of the visit was cut short after the Lower House heard an explanation from Sheikh Ra'fat. Mr. Sa'ad Hayel Al Srou, speaker of the House, succeeded in wrapping up the issue and many deputies were refused permission to speak: Ahmad Oweidi Al Abadi, an ultra-nationalist, was steaming to speak but was disallowed. Mr. Srou ended the discussion after half an hour, saying that the visit by the two deputies was a personal affair.

The visit was received by a strong campaign of popular protest particularly by Jordanians of Palestinian origin. The campaign is led by opposition parties, who launched a campaign of protest in Bay'a camp, the constituency of Sheikh Ra'fat, and in the first district of Hamadeh Faraneh. About 30 personalities representing all the political and social sectors residing in the camp met last Monday and discussed Ra'fat's visit to the Knesset, then released a statement condemning Ra'fat's visit.

The popular groups in the camp are collecting 20,000 signatures for a memo disavowing Sheikh Ra'fat representation of the community in the camp and asking him to resign from the Lower House.

Another strong statement was released by the political parties and the civic institutions and public figures in the first district, a Palestinian populated area, considering the visit of both deputies as dangerous and an attempt to transfer normalization from the official circle to the popular one. The statement added that the deputies (Faraneh and Ra'fat) do not represent the united people of Jordan and their presence in the Lower House does not reflect the wish of the people. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

'Carlos the Jackal' is found guilty in trial he denounces

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launched his boldest stroke: the December 1975 assault on the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries headquarters in Vienna and the kidnapping of 11 OPEC oil ministers from there to Algeria.

If terrorism has an international superstar, after the OPEC operation it was Carlos. But people expecting to glimpse a James Bond—or Che Guevara-like figure at the Paris trial, his first anywhere, were sadly disappointed. One French TV correspondent said the overweight defendant in a brown leisure suit and a silk scarf around his neck looked more like an aging Latin lounge singer. Carlos argued until the end that he had been "kidnapped" in Sudan and therefore his trial was "illegal."

Olivier Maudret, another defense lawyer, said the state resorted to trumped-up evidence and that French intelligence "torpedoed" the investigation of the murders in the Rue Toullier to cover up a

"state secret." He questioned why French police had failed to find and bring into testify three witnesses of the murders, all South American friends of Carlos.

Five years ago, while at large, Carlos was sentenced to a life term for the June 27, 1975, killings of Jean Donatini and Raymond Dous, agents of the French counter-intelligence agency, and Michel Moukharbil, a Lebanese known to Carlos as a sympathizer for the Palestinian cause. French criminal procedure required that Carlos be retried on the same charges after his capture.

On Monday, prosecutor Gino Necehl called for a life term for Carlos, saying the sentence he was asking for was "not a question of war, of revenge, but of implementing the law of the republic." Carlos answered with a guffaw. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Cheers for the Mother Theresa home for the homeless



As part of the charitable activities organized by Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan, a group of the management and staff of the hotel visited Mother Theresa's home for the homeless. Mr. Jonathan Soper, General Manager and Regional Director Operations Jordan and his team were warmly welcomed by the management and the residents of the home. Everybody enjoyed a lunch prepared by the Hotel's Chef, during which the Hotel's dance group "Ya Hala" gave a short Debkeh performance.

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JORDAN

W E E K



An unconventional report on Jordanian news and views edited by Marwan Al Asmar

Retirement age

■ An idea that maybe gaining greater currency these days is that of increasing the retirement age. Referring specifically to state employees, Prime Minister Abdel Salam Al Majali said that the retirement age could be increased from the present 60 to 65 years of age. Later on in the week, Deputy Prime Minister Dr Abdallah Nsour clarified that the government is not presently considering increasing the retirement age.



Al Majali

Press boycotts House

■ A tussle is brewing between Parliament and the press. The four daily newspapers—*Ad Dustour*, *Al Rai*, *Al Awwaq* and *Al Arab Al Yom*—are refusing to provide coverage of the sessions of both the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament. Newspaper employers say that this decision was taken as a protest against the General Secretariat of Parliament which is preventing journalists from carrying out their duties by confining them to one room in the Lower House. This is certainly a new step. Previously, members of the press were allowed unlimited access. It is argued that this is essential so that the journalist can carry out his job effectively. What is making the dailies more angry is that reporters of Petra (Jordan Press Agency) continue to enjoy unlimited access inside Parliament.

A case against the Prime Ministry

■ A legal dispute has ensued over the ownership of the land on which the Prime Ministry stands today. A Jordanian has filed a case against the Prime Minister and the Civil Public Prosecutor in the Court of First Instance in Amman. He is contesting the ownership of the buildings and land which make up the Prime Ministry complex. The plaintiff, who has already appointed a team of lawyers, used to own the land years ago. After he was convicted on a criminal offence, his liquid and fixed assets, including the 4th Circle plot of land, were confiscated by the state. But he was later retried and was found innocent. By that time the government had sold his property off through a public auction, and the late Sheriff Zeid Ben Nasser Al Jamil bought the land and building. He is now asking for a JD 1 million compensation.

...And another case against the government

■ The government could be having a bad day this week. President of the Jordan Medical Association, Dr Bassem Al Dajani says that his association is taking the Health Ministry to court over the issue of incentives. Dr Al Dajani says that the reconciliation committee that has been appointed to reach a settlement between doctors, dentists and pharmacists in the public health sector, and the Health Ministry, is now deadlocked. Dr Al Dajani says that he now hopes that the courts will act as final arbiters. The Association wants 60 percent of the charges of treating patients (those who can afford it) in government hospitals to be given to the medical staff whereas the government is only willing to cough up half of that. These public health employees have been on a "go-slow" before the formation of the reconciliation committee. Dr Dajani says that they will again review the situation after the court hearing.



Al Dajani

Jordanians in Iraqi jails

■ There are 140 Jordanians in Iraqi jails. This is according to a memorandum given by the Iraqi Ambassador in Amman to Foreign Minister Dr Fayez Al Tarawneh. But sources are saying that there could be more.

More private universities

■ The saying that necessity is the mother of invention should be indeed changed to education is the mother of invention. Jordan is to have six more private universities. Minister of Education Dr Munthir Al Masri says that he has agreed in principle to allow the establishment of yet more private universities in the Kingdom. Two American universities are to be established in both Amman and Aqaba. These are affiliates of universities in the United States. Also two more universities are Jordanian but have Arab shareholders, and a further two universities are to be wholly devoted to post-graduate studies.

Price of sugar to go down

■ The Ministry of Supply is to lower the price of one ton of sugar by JD 10. This is a gesture made by the government because of the outbreak of the Ramadan feast due to start at around the New Year. The price of one Kilogram of sugar should now go down to 300 fils. Secretary General of the Ministry Dr Mohammad Al Samadi urged the private sector to act accordingly and lower their prices.

Islamists

■ Elections to the 120-person Shura Council of the Islamic Action Front were completed last week. While political observers are saying that the results are a victory to the moderate wing in the IAF, it is not at all certain whether this is the case at all. Hardliners such as Hamam Said, Mohammad Abu Faris, Abdel Aziz Jabr and Jamil Abu Bakr among others also got re-elected. Elections to the post of General Secretary takes place tomorrow, Friday, and Dr Abdel Latif Arabyat is tipped to win.



Arabyat



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, speaks to reporters after chairing Tuesday's Cabinet session. The session included a discussion of the various phases of the social and economic development plan for the coming years. The Prince said it was important to continue to outline details of the plan away from the traditional concepts. He pointed out that it should depend on the principles of central planning, but must be decentralized in its execution.

The case of the Jordanian communists, at what expense unity

By Raed Al Abed
Star Staff Writer

THE JORDANIAN Communist Party (JCP) has ended its second public conference, or its big international communist festival as some described it. While its slogan is 'long live communism', its now seeking to adopt more pragmatic policies towards the government.

The 127 participants elected the party's 27-member central committee, the latter postponed another meeting to elect the politburo and the general secretary which will take place this Sunday.

The three-day conference which was attended by about 1000 guests representing 17 communist parties from around the world was described as one of muscle flexing by the Jordanian communists. However, the gathering failed to enthrone new blood in the 46-year-old party, as the classical communists dominated the seats of the central committee.

Mr Ya'qoub Zayadeen, an old guard communist, and leader of the JCP since 1985, decided to run again for the post of general secretary. Mr Zayadeen is a respected figure by the traditional communists as well as the young modern elements in the party.

The JCP, together with the center-right National Constitutional Party is considered one of the luckiest parties who were both allowed to hold their conferences at the Royal Cultural Center. Other parties like the People's Democratic Party, another leftist, were even denied permission to hold its conference in one of the hotels, despite the fact that

it was at the party's expense.

However, the conference wasn't opened with the Communist Internationale Anthem, as is usually the case, because a leading member in the Party kept the cassette in her pocket and gave party organizers another one titled *Nahwa Al Shabab* (We are the youth) saying "that the government treated us well by giving the party permission to hold the conference in the RCC."

Even more, party guests were allowed to travel through out the Kingdom at the expense of the Ministry of Tourism: Conference delegates were taken to Petra, Jerash and other places. Observers later sarcastically said that where treated like official guests.

Along with the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party and the Arab Land Party, the communist party violated the opposition parties' consensus to boycott the general elections. Two leading communists put up two candidates in the latest parliamentary. While Mohammad Al Butayneh managed to win a seat, Emily Nafa'a failed yet again to get elected.

Party's support in the elections was somewhat boosted by some protest votes from the other opposition parties, the rest of the nine parties.

During the conference the controversial issue of the party's participation in the last election was peppered over. The traditional leadership skillfully managed to steer the floor in other directions.

This is because they already knew that the young communists in the party opposed such participation.

"It is widely protested by

the young generation, because the party has always said democracy in the country is deteriorating and we should be pioneers of the opposition, not put ourselves aside," one veteran said.

However, a revolutionary young Marxist trend is strongly rising in the communist party which demands the adoption of stronger stands against government policies.

JCP's relation with the Israeli Communist Party (Rakah) is also surrounded by controversy in the party. Rakah was not invited to the JCP's conference because the former did not want to be accused of pro-normalization with Israel. Dr Mazen Hana the spokesman of the JCP emphatically said "we reject any normalization with Israel," considering the invitation of its Israeli counterpart as a normalization, "that was the reason why we did not invite the Israeli communist Party despite our historical relation."

However, the relation between the Jordanian communists and the Israeli ones is based on the fact that the latter recognizes the Palestinian legitimate rights. However, there is still a big gap between them. Rakah points out that Jerusalem as the "non-negotiable capital of Israel".

But the JCP relation with the government is improving. Observers say that while the party still wants to follow the classical ideological role, it nevertheless wants a smooth ride with both the establishment and current government policies.

However, there was a twist to the tale. At the end of the conference Dr Hana criticized the deteriorating situation of public freedoms in the country and warned of the consequences of introducing new legislation to govern professional associations and political parties. He said "Any tightening on the freedom of expression will drag the country into violence."

The JCP also expressed solidarity with the Syrian stance of the peace process, and also reiterated support and solidarity with Libya and the people of Iraq and Palestine. ■



Zayadeen

Euro-Med seeks for a more extensive dialogue

By Hisham Awadat
Special to The Star

EUROMESCO IS the trans-Mediterranean network of foreign policy and international relations' institutes of the countries of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. It constitutes a forum for an on-going dialogue on politics and security matters between both sides of the Mediterranean. The network is the result of the transformation of the Euro-Mediterranean Study Commission into Euro-Med (Euro-Mediterranean Study Commission) by its expansion to almost all members of the Partnership. The institutionalization of Euro-Mesco took place in June 1996.

The EuroMesco countries constitute 26 members and 6 observers. "We try to dissolve the misunderstanding and perception that exists between our countries," said Monica Da Silva from the Secretariat of the EuroMesco.

"It's important to hold meetings because the persons who attend would then have a multiplied effect on their countries by passing a clear message."

Da Silva, from Portugal, is involved in research on the Arab world and the Euro-Mediterranean relations, and includes examining the perception of the Arab world in European policies.

The network is already well-established. "We now have two working groups working inside the organization, one is about the strategic perspectives, and the other one is on political, economic and social issues," Da Silva. Already researchers on the working groups have prepared papers on the nature of the Euro-Med partnership a book will be published next year.

Also a report will be published at the end of this year containing the recommendations to officials for the Barcelona process.

"We are trying to work directly with the people who have influence on the whole process, so we try to be policy-oriented not just an academic organization." Officials on both sides are very much interested in the work of EuroMesco.

Its annual meeting was held in Tunis in last September, and the next one will be held in London in May 1998—after this meeting two representatives of EuroMesco will meet in Brussels the officials to relay the recommendations of their organization. ■

Christmas in Jerusalem is a hollow holiday

Continued from page 1

Throughout the holiday period, West Jerusalem remains its usual self: historic, classic, unadorned—with one exception. The YMCA, a landmark building across the street from the King David Hotel, decorates its soaring bell tower with two strands of Christmas lights dangling from opposite sides.

"We've decided that some institution in Jerusalem has to make a statement that Christmas is here," said Mike Bussey, director general of the West Jerusalem YMCA. "You have to laugh, really, when you compare our two straggly lines of lightbulbs to the extravaganzas in the States, but the message is that there is a Christmas presence here."

The Y takes care, however, to avoid offending its neighbors, and it gives its annual carillon concert on Christmas Eve in the early evening, not at midnight, on what is for virtually everyone here a work night. There have been no complaints, Bussey said.

"We had just thought it was something fun," he said, noting that the display had

also helped draw shoppers inside to his modest selection of Christmas gift items. "But people were calling to say 'Shame on you!'"

Even in Bethlehem, the unparalleled center of Christmas as the city believed to be the birthplace of Jesus, the holiday has fallen on tough times. Tourism is down, as it is across Israel and the West Bank. Moreover, Muslims outnumber Christians in the city these days, and fewer residents are joining in Bethlehem's traditional holiday celebrations in Manger Square and the Church of the Nativity.

Bussey, who has lived with his family in Jerusalem for almost eight years, said he still misses the feeling of community celebration that marks the Christmas season in his native Minnesota. But he added that the spirit and joy of the holiday are alive here too.

"There aren't as many places to find the specialness of Christmas in Jerusalem, but it is here," he said. "And sometimes, I think the elusiveness of it makes it even more special." ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Promising talent reflect the NMC's training ability

AMMAN (Star)—Last Sunday, the Main Theater of the Royal Cultural Center hosted a concert by the students of the National Music Conservatory (NMC) Noor Al Hussein Foundation. This marked the end of the first semester of the 1997/1998 scholastic year.

The concert was hosted by Ms Asma Jarrah who said that the concert underlines the NMC's commitment to holding such events because they affect

positively on students and provide them with the self-confidence to perform before a stage audience.

The concert started with a performance of Vivaldi's "Minuet" followed by works by the Russian Kahlenski, the Polish Chopin, the English Desmond and the French Ravel.

After this, a group of elementary level students in the Arab music program at the

NMC gave an illuminating performance of a number of traditional Arab musical pieces. Then Mozart's Concertante was performed followed by a musical piece on the piano for Beethoven. This was performed by the eight-year-old Karim Sa'ed whose brilliant performance drew cries of acclaim from the audience and won him a standing ovation.

The Choir of the NMC launched the second part of the concert with a number of western songs and concluded with a song by the famous Rahabani Brothers.

The rest of the concert featured performances of western music. The most notable item was a truly captivating performance by Anar Ibrahmov on the violin and his sister Narmina Ibrahmov on the harp, an instrument that is only studied at the NMC.

The concert ended on a modern note as four NMC students performed two pieces of Jazz that were well received by the audience.

What drew attention most was the formation of ensembles performing various items of the program especially western music. These displayed the students' ability to perform



A view from one of the events in the concerts

pieces in a new arrangement different from the formation for which the original piece was composed.

With its versatile program and mastery performance of the

students, the concert proved that the NMC follows a serious academic policy. There is no doubt that these young music talents will become the pillars of an active and convincing

Jordanian musical movement thanks to the awareness of parents and the care of the Conservatory with its highly qualified faculty. ■



(Photo: James Joseph Hester, leader of Austria's far-right party, published a book in which he tries to depict "extremists" accused of having killed the other two major Austrian parties, in an effort to pave the way to the leadership of Austria in 1989.)

Our Say

Formulating an alternative to Oslo

WE DO not share President Clinton's optimism that 1998 will bring a lasting peace between Israel and the Palestinians, not to mention Israel and the Syrians. If the disappointing events and shattered hopes of 1997 are anything to go by, then the new year promises to be even worse for the prospects of a genuine and just peace in the Middle East.

Already the game of cat and mouse played by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has succeeded in derailing the bulk of territorial and other obligations outlined under the Oslo accords. Even worse, Netanyahu's recent statements about the West Bank being an integral part of Israel, point to the anti-Oslo undercurrents which have succeeded reversing the Madrid process and return all parties to point zero.

Under Netanyahu's government, the main features of the Madrid process and the agreements that were signed with the Palestinians have been obliterated. US mediation has failed to force the intransigent Likud-led government to meet the Palestinians half way. Israel's peace with Egypt and Jordan is far from being warm and healthy. The region is tense and talk about peace is off-set by rumors about imminent military confrontations.

Against such a backdrop, the Arab world is required to formulate an alternative to the faltering US-led peace process. A second line of defense is needed to fill the vacuum created by the state of no war, no peace that Netanyahu is creating in the region. Israel, it appears, can afford to have the current process drag for ever. The Palestinians cannot.

As Israel evades its obligations, it is going full force in its plan to Judaize Jerusalem, build more settlements in the West Bank and create a *de facto* situation that renders all agreements outdated. But the Palestinians and the rest of the Arabs must not allow the current stalemate to turn into a weapon in Israeli hands.

Arab response must be proactive and strong. It must seek to employ all diplomatic means available to turn the pressure on the Israeli government and the sponsor of the peace process.

America's successful and effective use of the UN Security Council against Iraq is a case in point. The Arabs must work to bring the UN back into the picture. Israel remains an occupying power bound by international resolutions. It stands in violation of countless UN resolutions and bilateral agreements. It cannot expect to be treated as a full member of the UN while ignoring its obligations and responsibilities.

It is clear that the United States, in particular the Clinton administration, has reached the end of the road with regard to its influence on the Israeli position. A series of recent meetings between the US Secretary of State and the Israeli Prime Minister in European capitals have failed to deliver a firm and unambiguous commitment on Netanyahu's part to honor the agreements and redeploy from Palestinian lands. A meeting with President Clinton in Washington early next year is not expected to make a dramatic change in the Israeli position, unless the drama lies in Washington's decision to adopt Netanyahu's line of thinking.

Letters to the Editor

Medical consequences of Gulf War

To The Editor,

The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas has found the major cause of Gulf War syndrome and have mapped out three neurological syndromes caused by three different combinations of chemicals used in the Gulf. Please visit their web site at: <http://www.swmed.edu/home/pages/epidemiology/gws/>

My point is this. The United States lost the Gulf War with 100,000 lives in ruin through sickness and America gained nothing. George Bush listened to Margaret Thatcher and the Israeli lobby and got us into a war we did not need to fight.

Now President Clinton is planning a new war. What will be the medical consequences of that future conflict? Will it unleash a new plague?

The Gulf War did not lower the price of gas, save lives, or bring security for Americans.

We have killed hundreds of thousands of Iraqi men, women, and children and Iraq never attacked or even threatened to attack the United States.

Not since Vietnam have we killed so many people with so little justification. I am an American but I must say that America is an arrogant, war mongering nation and America's Middle East foreign policy is in large part constructed in Jerusalem, not in Washington.

I want America to be a good neighbor to the world, not an imperial policeman of the world.

Sincerely,

Christopher Calder calder@clipper.net
377 W 8th, apt. 114
Eugene, OR 97401
(541) 345-6372

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URL: <http://www.arabia.com/star>

Publisher & Editor-in-Chief

Osama El-Sherif

Managing Editor

Dr Marwan Al Asmar

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Notes from the Levant

'Resident alien' broadcasters: A Jordanian media conundrum

By Osama El-Sherif

A STRANGE thing happened to me while driving to work the other day. I was scanning stations on my car's FM radio when I stumbled onto a crystal clear Arabic station playing modern, mostly Gulf, pop music. It was obviously transmitting on a local frequency, a fact that aroused my interest. So I tuned to the station for a while until it became clear to me that I was in fact listening to MBC FM radio from London.

As it turned out everybody I know was also tuning to the same FM station, which was bouncing its signal off a satellite to a Jordan Radio relay station and then back on air via local transmitters. Soon I learned that every taxi driver, secretary, mother and young man and woman were listening to the new comer on Jordanian airwaves. That's an important fact. I thought to myself, Under Jordanian laws, only the government can transmit radio waves over local frequencies. Many Jordanians have applied, and were told to wait, to run privately-owned local radio and television stations. They were told to wait because the current legislation does not permit private citizens to run their own broadcast services. The same applies to the majority of Arab countries, where control of the electronic media rests firmly in government hands.

But under a special agreement, legal or not I don't know, the Saudi owned MBC was

able to transmit its signal over local airwaves with the Jordanian government's help and approval. Two other stations, France's Arabic service of Radio Monte Carlo and London's BBC Arabic language service are also getting ready to ride the local airwaves and reach Jordanians on the elitist FM frequency. The only other Arab country, that I know of, that has permitted something like that to take place is Qatar, which also allows BBC Arabic service to broadcast locally.

Such a development is both interesting and worrying. It is interesting because it reflects a highly liberal attitude, actually more liberal than anywhere else in the world, towards foreign electronic media by characteristic conservative and conspiracy-ridden governments when it comes to allowing their own citizens to operate privately owned radio stations.

The legal grounds are both clear and ambiguous. On the one hand, these stations are not operating locally and therefore do not answer to laws of the land, especially those concerned with regulating the media. So in effect they have the best of two worlds: local airwaves and foreign immunity. On the other, they are using local help and permission and therefore one would assume that some sort of a legal framework exists. It is worrying because of the ethical and political consequences that such a precedence allows.

For instance, while a local publisher is answerable to the country's press, and other laws, the "resident alien"—to borrow one of America's fascinating immigration terms—broadcaster is not. So what happens when the BBC, or Radio Monte Carlo airs a story or a news item that is not to the liking of the local authorities? Does it pull it off the air, just like it would if the broadcaster was a Jordanian?

But that is not all. MBC FM, airing for almost 24 hours on the local frequencies, is now by far more popular than the government-run Arabic radio station. It is a sleeker, jazzier and more interesting station directed to the youth market, with a well presented, fulfilling and timely news bulletins.

Radio Monte Carlo will probably appeal to another segment of Jordanians and BBC Arabic service is likely to claim the rest of the local audience. What's the logic behind that? The government was already losing the race in the television arena to a squad of highly polished, some very controversial, Arabic satellite stations. But with the Arab, and non-Arab, satellite stations, the government was not lending the competition any help, other than by way of its own awkward and outdated information and media management. Arab citizens could now pick up any satellite station by turning their dish antennas towards the heavenly bodies in

search of stations such as LBC, Future, MBC TV, Al Jazeera, Dubai and many others.

Choice is of the essence here. We should, as Arabs, enjoy a free choice in this world of the information revolution. But that choice should be free of the invisible government hand. Even more, it should not be a choice dictated by a policy of double standards. Why should MBC FM radio enjoy a free hand in the local Jordanian market, when Jordanians are prevented from joining the fray?

The case of the "resident alien" broadcaster is a classic example of the media disarray that we find ourselves in today. At a time when a government appointed censor decides for us if we are eligible enough to read today's copy of *Al Hayat*, *The Economist* or the *Guardian* using his own value judgment, the same power that appoints him allows an equally free medium to use local airwaves to reach every home, car, truck and tent in the country.

This is indeed a conundrum that the government fails to solve. It is a case of Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde: the open-minded media conscious and transparent government, and the revisionist and patriarchal state organ that knows what's best for the people, all caught in one hapless body. Which will triumph by the end of the day, I wonder? ■

Middle East Beat by Khairi Janbek

Saraglio Embroglio

WITHOUT HIDING their disappointment, Turkey lashed out at the EU for getting the treatment that it thought was unfair. Prime Minister Mesud Yilmaz, managed to find the silver lining surrounding the cloudy affair between his country and the EU. He managed to present himself as a hero who would not hesitate to take measures to defend Turkey's honor. It must be said that a European defeat has turned out to be an excellent public relations exercise for Mr Yilmaz.

Nevertheless, what happened in Turkey recently, cannot but send a cautionary message to all in the region, who are bound by one kind or another by an agreement with the EU. The last Erbakan government in Turkey, was considered as anathema to the European club of nations, and consequently, signals were sent to Turkey to the effect that, under such circumstances, it would have been impossible to even consider starting of negotiations to enter the EU. Hence, an appealing ear was thrown into the fray to keep Turkey as a stable ally in NATO but nothing much else.

This has become apparent with the recent exchange of harsh words between the German and Turkish heads of governments. Ironically, it was Germany who was the most encouraging towards the Turks, and it was the first to say that the EU is not a club of "banana republic" nations. The Turkish response was not any kinder. Mr Yilmaz accused the EU for being a club for Christian countries. Now, between banana republics and Christian nations, Mr Yilmaz shifted to the USA to show the contrast in reception between the EU and USA. He opted for the NATO leaders rather than that of the EU with the added value of economic agreements and advantages.

As things stand now, does Turkey really believe that the EU is a club of Christians? and does Germany really believe that Turkey is a banana republic? These harsh exchanges seem to indicate that the cheapest excuses will be used to justify avoidance on the one hand, and failure on the other, without thinking of the wider repercussions that may ripple in the Middle East and Europe. It would have been much better for all, if both stuck to the real version of why both sides came to a disagreement.

For if the surface is scratched, many countries within the EU, still believe that Turkey is not ready yet to join their union. For there are still many issues that need to be sorted out by Turkey, before its entrance application is considered. To start with, the question of Cyprus is not likely to be solved in the near future, and the EU wishes to consider the entry of the Greek side into the union.

Now Turkish fears in this respect, are quite obvious, as "Enosis" will be coming through the window when it was resisted as the gate, and if the Turkish side of the island is not internationally accepted as a separate entity, then such a move will force Turkey to annex Turkish Cyprus, if at least Turkey is not considered for EU membership.

That of course will complicate matters even more. The question of widespread torture in Turkish jails seems to crop up every now and then, but the EU is taking this issue very seriously, and Turkey needs to comply with it rather than defy it, in order to present itself as a viable candidate for what it aspires to become. The Kurdish question is still a hlemish on Turkish human rights record, and the EU is still holding as a bone of contention, so without its resolution nothing much can happen. Yet, no one mentions the fact that there are already many million Turks living in Europe, and three million of them in Germany!!! ■

A hard-hitting insight into the last Gulf war

War in the Gulf, 1990-91: The Iraq-Kuwait conflict and its implications, by Majid Khadduri and Edmund Ghareeb, Oxford University Press, 1997

Reviewed by Howard M. Sachar

THE WEST'S comprehension of the Gulf War, beginning with Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, and concluding with the American-led "rescue mission" of the little Arab emirate, parallels our nostalgic idealization of the other "good war," the 1939-45 crusade against Hitler. It appeared to possess the identical ingredients of a classic morality play: a brutal dictator, tyrannizing his own people and his neighbors alike; an innocent victim, alone and defenseless against a mighty predator; and a courageous Rooseveltian president, orchestrating an international alliance of free nations to preserve the ideal of collective security.

Majid Khadduri and Edmund Ghareeb regard this interpretation as shallow. With impressive documentation, and in workmanlike, straightforward prose, they make plain that contentious frontier issues between Iraq and Kuwait extend back well into the 19th century. The very configuration of Kuwait, indeed, its very existence, resulted from *diktat* arbitrarily imposed by imperial nabobs in London and Madras, and intended first and foremost to protect British colonial interests, and less of all to reflect the legitimate dynastic and tribal claims of the Gulf's regional inhabitants. One particularly burdensome legacy of this imperialist conceit was Whitehall's arrogation to Kuwait of Warba and Bubiyan, island directly facing the Shan Al Arah estuary that served as Iraq's in-



Remembering the Gulf War: An American soldier gets ready!

dispensable maritime outlet to the Arabian Gulf.

In Saddam Hussein's possession, those islands would significantly have facilitated Iraqi access to the world's oil markets, in some degree even have compensated for the nation's recent war against Iran, a debilitating inconclusive struggle that had raged from 1980 to 1988, and that had left the Baghdad regime all but bankrupt. At no time, however, did the Kuwaiti government evince the slightest interest in renegotiating these territorial anachronisms, even under the aegis of other Arab governments.

Saddam's black mood in the years after 1988 was influenced not merely by lack of military success or logistical rectification. In the Iraqi president's view—and in some measure that of Khadduri and Ghareeb—his armies alone had "saved" the Arab Middle East from the hordes of the Ay-

atollah Khomeini. Hadn't that achievement entitled Iraq to financial compensation from other Arab governments, and specifically to a cancellation of Iraq's debts to them? Saddam's perspective in fact was not shared by the wealthiest of those creditors, the Emir of Kuwait. He expected repayment. Worse yet, the Kuwaiti government insisted on pumping its own oil far beyond its OPEC "quota," thereby driving down prices for other Gulf producers. For the Iraqi treasury, the loss amounted to billions of dollars in anticipated oil income. Here, too, however, the Kuwaitis rejected the intermediary overtures of other Arab nations. By the author's account, therefore it was an act of desperation that Saddam Hussein determined to resolve the territorial and financial issues in one fell swoop—by invading Kuwait.

In deciphering the complex territorial and financial double

belix that led to War in the Gulf, the authors unquestionably have rectified the more simplistic accounts provided by earlier historians and journalists. This reviewer has some concern about the volume's tendency to gloss over, if not rationalize, the authentic barbarity with which Saddam Hussein's army deracinated the inhabitants and resources of Kuwait, the gratuitous Scud missile assault against the civilian population of Israel, and the chilling arsenal of biological weapons Saddam palpably had been accumulating—and using—against Iranian and Kurdish civilians. Manifestly, the West's ongoing, if selective, economic blockade has imposed cruel penalties upon innocent Iraqi women and children. Doubtless, innocent German women and children suffered the consequences of retribution against Nazi Germany. Yet the authors have not made a convincing case for re-education. If Saddam has foreclosed international access to his secret arsenal, it cannot be assumed that his reasons are less benign now than in the past.

Notwithstanding these minor caveats, *War in the Gulf* reminds us again that Majid Khadduri, a renowned and prolific scholar of diplomatic and legal history, is precisely the man to have produced this richly upholstered study, and characteristically to have applied fresh insight and matchless erudition to one of the most volatile issues on the current world scene. As a specialist in Gulf affairs, Edmund Ghareeb has ably collaborated in this important work. Students of Middle Eastern affairs, and specifically of Gulf affairs, will grow this contribution at their peril. ■

The writer is professor of history and international affairs at George Washington University, Middle East Insight



(Photo: James Joseph Hester, leader of Austria's far-right party, published a book in which he tries to depict "extremists" accused of having killed the other two major Austrian parties, in an effort to pave the way to the leadership of Austria in 1989.)

business scene

■ The Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) is to reduce the discount rate from 8 per cent to 7.75 per cent, in line with the fall in interest rates since last June. Interest rates were cut on re-purchasing deposit certificates from 9.50 per cent to 9 per cent. This is the third reduction since June when it was 10 per cent. Such a step encourages other banks to reduce interest on deposits and loans. These reductions come after an eight-year tough policy adopted by the CBJ to maintain high interest rates in order to increase the reserve of foreign currency. Following the Central Bank step is the Export and Finance Bank which decided to cut interest rate on its banking facilities for clients to 0.75 per cent with effect from next year. This will encourage Jordanian investors and support national industries.

■ A joint Jordanian-Bahraini plant is being established at a capital of \$350,000. Shadi Aluminium plant will start production of utensils in mid-1998. The Bahraini company in charge of the joint venture "BRAMCO" has already sent Bahraini media items to Jordan to explore the possibility of marketing them in the Kingdom. Other incomplete products were also sent to Jordan to be assembled and completed till the new plant becomes operational. The company plans to manufacture 20,000 cuisine pieces every month. In addition it seems that it's willing to export its products to the Middle East countries.

■ Overall revenues of the Social Security Corp., from 1980 till the first quarter of this year reached JD 907 million. The corporation's expenditure in the same period totalled JD 80 million. The number of employees and participants in the social security system is 305,000 working in 12,000 public and private institutions.

■ Jordan Cement Factories Co., has signed a JD 20 million loan agreement with the Arab Bank to reschedule its long- and short-term debts. This is the first agreement to be concluded after the latest reductions in interest rates. Till the end of last November, the company has generated net profits estimated at JD 11.2 million despite reductions in local sales by 12%.

Foreign Exchange

	Buy JD	Sell JD
US \$	0.7080	0.7100
£	1.1510	1.1568
DM	0.4124	0.4145
Sfr	0.4801	0.4825
FRF	0.1227	0.1233
YEN (100)	0.5624	0.5652
DEL	0.3667	0.3685
LT (100)	0.0419	0.0421

Dispute among industrialist continues, but no final resolution concluded

AMMAN (Star)—Jordanian industrialists were busy last week discussing a suggestion by the Amman Chamber of Industry to change its name to the Jordan Chamber of Industry.

Such a change is seen by its supporters as necessary to help boost the efficiency of the industrial sector and reorganize the operations of large, medium and small-size enterprises in a manner that would guarantee their success.

President of the Amman Chamber of Commerce Mr Khalid Abu Hassan defends the proposal and stresses that it is for the welfare of the national industry to organize efforts and associate the widespread companies and industrial activities under one umbrella. If they continue to exist as they are, then they will remain to function at limited resources and would be unable to provide diverse services or face global challenges.

In his view, the would-be Jordan Chamber of Industry could serve as an umbrella for the scattered chambers of industry around the country to guarantee an overall and permanent development for this sector and face future problems in line with the new trend to achieve more openness to the world market economy.

Supporters of the new name argue that having one central chamber with branches and sub-centers in all governorates will help secure coherent and



Jordanian industry would be enhanced further under one chamber

well-organized services for industrial activities.

Also, it will help to follow up on the day-to-day problems of manufacturers and provide them with substantial resolutions.

Among other reasons that are given by officials in the Amman Chamber of Industry for a change in its name is that the Jordanian industrial sector has expanded in a way that led to scattering of the responsibilities in the Chamber to carry out measures to protect the national

industry. Since the Chamber was established, the number of industrial corporations increased from 100 companies in 1961 to 24,000 today.

This means that the Chamber has come to represent 97 per cent of industrial activities in the Kingdom covering investments, operations, production and exports. However, after holding a meeting to discuss the suggestion at the Amman Chamber of Industry, industrialists

resent Karak, Ma'an, Tafilah and Aqaba, the third in the Central area to represent Amman, Madaba and Salt and the fourth in the north to represent Irbid, Jerash and Ajloun.

These industrial branches consider the step to establish a union for Jordanian Chambers of Industry as an essential measure to unify the industrial sector, however, they argue that before such measure takes place, it should be preceded by establishing chambers of industry to government.

They stress that they have the right to defend their interests within a framework of certain groups or associations.

Nevertheless the dispute over having one chamber or more on the title of chamber, is not an urgent or grave issue. Rather, local industrialist should seek ways of consolidating and strengthening the industrial sector which is considered the backbone of the economic body. Moreover, they have to explore ways of improving the quality of domestic produce to cope with worldwide challenges and compete with international producers.

Today, industrial sources express concern at the government's intention to reduce customs tariffs on imported goods by the beginning of next year. The expected decrease is said to be 10 per cent, as imported items will be exempted from customs duties that are now 40 per cent to 30 per cent.

This implies that the ceiling of protection of the national industry will be curtailed to 30 per cent. They are fearful that such a decision would negatively reflect on Jordanian industry which is already overburdened with many taxes and duties on imported raw materials. Also the local manufacturers have to pay additional taxes on their finished product in addition to cover water and energy crisis.

business chronicle

Farmers protest fertilizer increase

THE JORDAN Phosphate Mines' decision to increase the price of dual ammonium phosphate fertilizer by 70 per cent is causing much anger among farmers. The ton of this fertilizer will now be sold at JD 160 and JD 170. Defenders of the decision say it came about as a result of action by some farmers who were discovered smuggling big quantities of this material outside the country—buying it at subsidized prices and selling it outside for large amounts.

Sameh Al Madani, general manager of the Phosphate Mines Co., said that because of the subsidy offered by the company to farmers, it has suffered losses estimated at JD 70 per one ton to encourage farmers to cultivate their crops. But added that this privilege was abused.

"We have to put an end to those greedy people who abuse the company and the farmers at the same time." However, Minister of Agriculture Mr Mijhem Khreisha seems to disapprove such a decision. He was quoted as saying that "any rise is redeemed to increase the expenses of production."

For their part farmers expressed their objection to the rise, describing such a move as unjust, as it will increase the cost of agricultural products for consumers and limit opportunities for local exports.

They said that such a rise ignores the real conditions of the agricultural sector and gives other companies excuses to increase the price of similar items.

Farmers in the Jordan Valley pointed out that the high price of agricultural supplies has been an unresolved issue for a long time, and hinders the work of this sector in the absence of legislations and government supervision on prices.

The farmers called on the Agricultural Union to pressure the concerned authorities and provide them with supplies at competitive prices and end the monopoly situation. They also demanded that farmers receive urgent loans at facilitated conditions to help them through the agricultural season.

Also farmers expressed hopes that the decision to increase the price of ammonium phosphate would be reversed and that subsidy for this material continues.

On another hand, the rapporteur of the Agricultural Committee in the Lower House, Salamah Al Hiyari protested the decision. "It is irrational and unacceptable to stop smuggling the material or punishing the violators by increasing its price."

He described it as adding more burdens on farmers' shoulders, terming it as "unfair and could not remedy the problem", he maintained.

Also protesting the decision is the National Consumer Protection Society which commented on the fertilizer's hike describing it as "unjustified exploitation of subsidy given from the company to the farmers."

Referring to the losses claimed by the Phosphate Mines Co., the NCP said that it is not logical to justify the decision and offset its losses by adding to the farmers' responsibilities and doubling their sufferings.

It called on the company to review its decision and protect the farmers' rights and resume its assistance for such a vital sector of the national economy.

Most ambitious program yet for Amman-based EU media project

THE MED Media Jemstone Network has announced a JD 1 million program of media training and development activities for 1998. Twelve of the 15 planned events will take place in the Eastern Mediterranean, at least five of them in Jordan with the active involvement of Jemstone's main regional partner JRTV.

Jemstone's aim is to increase contacts and understanding between journalists and other media professionals in Europe and the Middle East. The project's been running for four years and moved its head office to Amman in summer 1996. Jemstone is operating in all the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean and recently set up contact points in Yemen and the Gulf. Over 50 of the main media organizations in the region are involved in the Jemstone Network and more than 400 of their staff have attended Jemstone activities.

The highlight of the new program is a Euro-Med conference on the future of journalism and the media, scheduled for autumn 1998. Working papers from earlier Jemstone seminars and workshops will be presented and the conference will explore ways of ensuring that the role and importance of good journalism is understood and advanced in all the countries of the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The program also includes: four specialist reporters workshops for economic, education, environment and media correspondents; media management courses on audience and readership research and running training departments;

a short workshop in internet for the media; and a summer course in Holland for young journalists from all branches of the media. In addition, Jemstone can fund short exchange visits and consultancy assignments and has an interactive media web-site.

To increase the range and number of activities Jemstone is seeking new partners; for

example the February Specialist Reporters Workshop for Economic Correspondents will be run jointly with the Economic Development Institute of the World Bank. And there are plans for an Education Correspondents' Workshop with UNICEF.

Announcing the new program, Jemstone Director Tudor Lomas, said it proved

that the project had been right to move its headquarters from Europe to the region. "We have received fantastic support, particularly from JRTV, and I hope in return the new program shows that we have been able to make our activities more relevant to the media here because we are in everyday contact with them."

British Midland The Airline for Europe

BRITISH MIDLAND will break Europe's biggest monopoly air route and reduce fares when it launches a new service from Manchester Airport to London Heathrow with eight daily return flights, starting on 29 March 1998.

The route launch once again reinforces the position of British Midland as the consumer's champion on Europe's highest volume air services.

Currently, nearly one million passengers a year use the Manchester to Heathrow service, which is the largest volume route in Europe where the customer has no choice of airline.

Sir Michael Bishop, chairman, British Midland, said:

"We are responding to the strongest possible representations, made to us by commerce and industry in the North West, that the present situation of an indifferent rail service and a monopoly air route to London, is seriously harming the competitiveness of this important region of the UK."

As the second largest UK airline, this new route completes an important piece of the jigsaw for the British Midland network which provides meaningful competition and choice on Europe's busiest air routes.

For the first time on the Manchester-Heathrow route, business travellers will be able to enjoy a separate business-class cabin and associated benefits, including new, wider seats. In line with British Midland's policy of offering a choice of competitive business fares, all of these benefits will be available with a saving of up to £20 compared with existing business fares.

The new route development will also give more access to and from Manchester and the North West of England for the 17 code-share airline partners with whom British Midland co-operates and has been warmly welcomed by these carriers.

In the 10 months of the current financial year to 31 Octo-

ber, the turnover of the airline increased by 16 per cent to £452.2 million (1996: £387.6 million) and carried 5.1 million passengers (1996: 4.76 million), a 7.1 per cent increase over the same period last year. The passenger load factor advanced to 70.1 per cent (1996: 67.3 per cent).

In the absence of any circumstance adversely affecting trading in the last two months of the financial year, it is anticipated that the pre-tax profit for the year ended 31 December 1997 will be not less than £17 million (1996: £6.1 million).

By Christopher Adams

THE US insurance industry has moved to protect itself against losses arising from the millennium bomb by drawing up special exclusion clauses.

The move follows similar action in the UK, where insurance companies last month decided to exclude such risks from standard policy wordings, and has prompted immediate protests from commercial insurance buyers.

The millennium bomb is a problem arising from the inability of some computer software to distinguish between this century and the next. At the turn of the millennium, many computers and machines could malfunction, causing billions of dollars in damage to business.

Insurance regulators in 25 states across the US have approved wordings for general liability policies excluding any claim for losses related to the failure of computer systems to recognise dates during 2001 and beyond.

"This kind of problem is not a fortuitous event," said David Oswald of the Insurance Services Office, which has drawn up the clauses. "There is no loss experience for this either, so nothing is built into standard rates. If anybody wants coverage for this, we think it is only proper that something extra be charged."

For small businesses and retail outlets, the additional cost of securing cover would probably be minimal, he said. But large multinationals could face additional expenses running to millions of dollars.

Insurance brokers have criticised the wordings, saying the exclusions were too broad. Todd Muller, assistant vice-president at the Independent Insurance Agents of America, said brokers were also concerned that the standard exclusion clauses were unfairly aimed at smaller businesses, which did not usually negotiate individual terms.

He compared the latest move with the "excruciating" experience that followed exclusion of pollution liability several years ago, when insurers were accused of refusing to cover companies which had no identifiable exposure to such a risk.

Financial Times Syndication

IMF says Asian crisis will cut back world growth

By Vicki Barnett

THE INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund has cut its forecast for world economic growth as a result of the Asian financial crisis.

In a special report, the Fund admitted that it had previously been too optimistic and said its new estimate could turn out to be too high if Japan's economic slowdown worsened.

The IMF, which is playing a central role in emergency support for troubled Asian economies, estimated that the global economy would expand by 3.5 per cent in 1998, 0.8 percentage points lower than forecast in September.

The report recommended that, to help contain the crisis, monetary authorities in North America and Europe should delay rises in interest rates, and even be prepared to relax rates if the situation worsened.

The forecast came a week after the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development warned that financial turbulence in Asia

could knock nearly 1 percent off growth of the world's leading economies.

The Fund acknowledged it "did not forecast the recent crises, and in retrospect was too optimistic in its baseline projections."

The IMF remained optimistic about growth prospects in North America and Europe, but identified a number of risks which could undermine its central forecast. The key near-term risk, the report said, was the possibility that Japan's economic slowdown could get worse.

The IMF has slashed its growth forecast for Japan, citing financial sector problems, weak domestic demand, and the strong impact of the Asian crisis. It estimated the Japanese economy would grow by just 1.1 per cent next year, compared to its previous forecast of 2.1 per cent.

The OECD last week cut its forecast for Japan from 2.3 per cent to 1.7 per cent in 1998. The IMF forecast did not take into account Tokyo's

recent economic stimulus package. However, Michael Mussa, the IMF's chief economist, said at a press conference that although the Japanese package was "a step in the right direction," there was a risk the economy might continue to deteriorate.

The report warned that confidence in Asian economies could take longer to return than was currently expected. This would have potentially serious consequences for the world economy.

At the time of the previous forecasts, made in its World Economic Outlook publication in September, the IMF did not consider the Asian crisis would have substantial implications for the global economy. However, its latest estimate was that the Asian crisis would reduce growth in other major industrial countries by around 0.4 per cent of gross domestic product. This effect would be partially offset by stronger than expected momentum of growth in North America and Europe.

The IMF predicted 1998 GDP growth of 2.4 per cent for the US, down 0.2 percentage points from its last forecast.

Output in the European Union was projected to grow by 2.7 per cent next year, a downward revision of 0.1 points from the IMF's previous forecast. The forecast for Britain was reduced by 0.2 points to 2.4 per cent. The Fund predicted a sharp slowdown in countries directly affected by the currency crises, with South Korea estimated to grow by 2.5 per cent, down from the forecast of 6 per cent. It predicted Thailand would experience no growth in 1998.

Financial Times Syndication

MARKET WATCH 20 - 23 December

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central Trade National Industry Cerama Industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Eastingering NAMICO Industry Reserve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EDMCO Arab Investment NAMICO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Fund Chemical Industry Jordan Gulf Bank
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JENCO Jordan Ceramics Factory Al Aser Investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arab Insurance Jordan Gulf Insurance Arab Pharm. Industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Cable Bank Of Jordan Jordan Gulf Bank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Trade Arab Investment Bank of Jordan
General Price Pointer	169,210	168,280	168,840
Trade Volume	1945230	2958969	3770249
Stock Volume	1286825	2044844	1924831
Highest Traded Stocks	790380	508444	1054990
	* Arab Pharm.	* Arab Bank	* Al Ahi Bank

All data provided by ACCESS Tel: 646868 Fax: 646949

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هكذا من الأصل

AROUND TOWN



The Italians are in Amman

● A group of Italian journalists spent two days at the Inter-Continental Jordan as part of their familiarization trip to Jordan. Eight journalists visited Jordan by invitation from the Italian Tourism Agency Rallo Viaggi as part of their task to promote Jordan. Petra was their second destination after Amman.



All the art that's fit to print

By Christian Doumit
Special to The Star

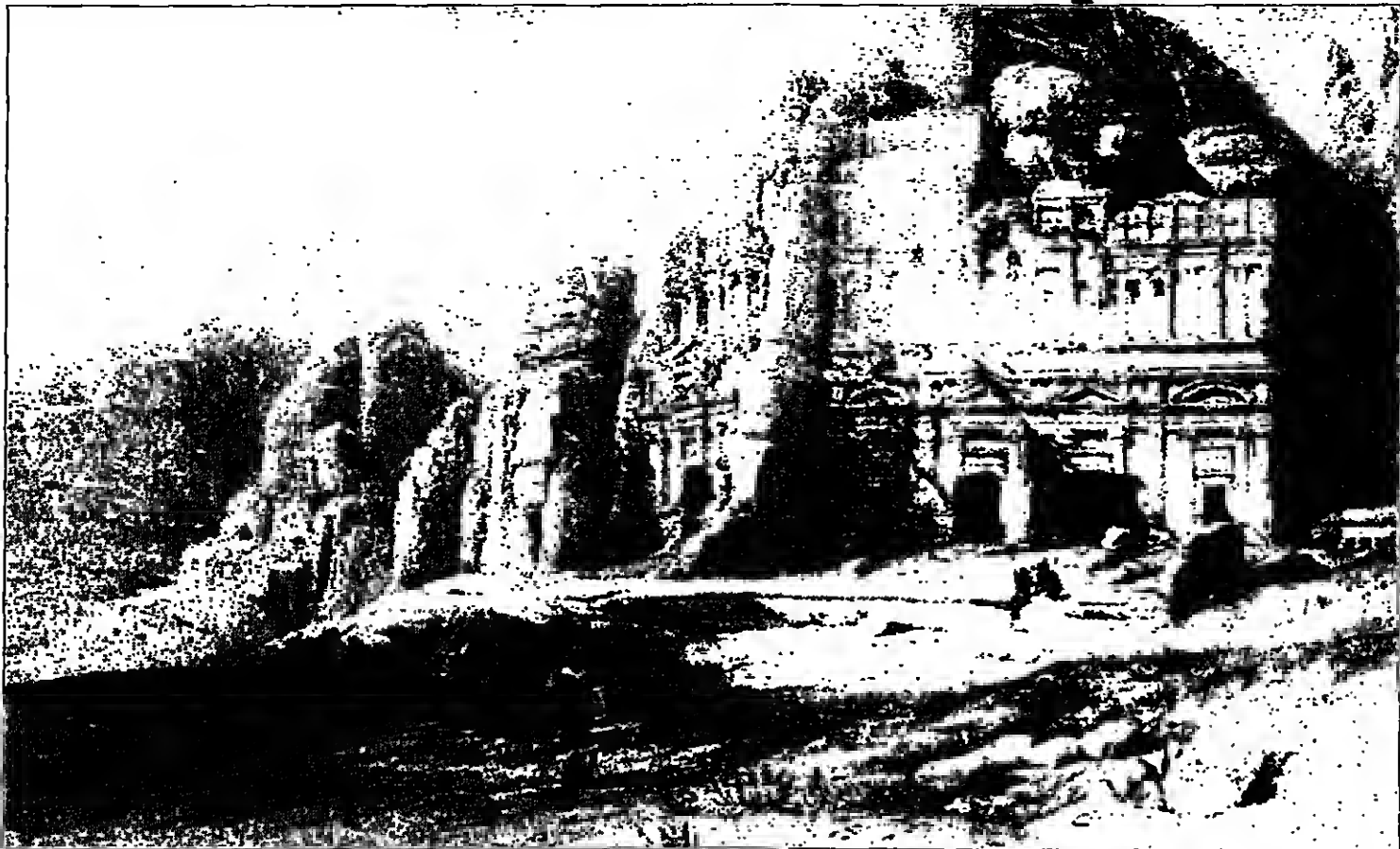
"He explored that patriarchal land, he searched its innermost recesses and returned to his native country laden with the richest treasures after having completed the finest pilgrimage of art. He was the first and the greatest artistic pioneer who has opened up that sacred country to our kin."

J. Bullant, *the Life of David Roberts*, Edinburgh, 1866.

When it comes to travel/artists of the Holy Land, there is but one undisputed claimant to excellence. It is David Roberts, a prolific artist of the 19th century orientalist tradition, whose speciality was architectural and topographical paintings as well as evocative landscapes. Through his travels which took him to Alexandria in 1838, he spent several months sketching and exploring upper Egypt and Nubia. In February 1839, he traveled to Sinai, Petra, Jaffa, Jerusalem, Nazareth, St. John of Acre, Tyre and Sidon, then on to Baalbek in Lebanon. David Roberts returned to England in 1840 with hundreds of drawings and sketches. There were drawn to be used for prints and studio pictures.

Thus, his prints—lithographed by Louis Haghe—were published in six volumes entitled *Views of the Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt, and Nubia*. In 1842, his publisher Francis Graham Moon paid Roberts £3000 for the right to reproduce them as lithographs. Many of these albums in which these lithographs were inserted were later broken up to extract individual prints to be framed and hung on walls.

It is perhaps useful to explain what is an original print as opposed to a reproduction. How can something be both original and yet duplicated? An original print is individually created while the printed art work suggests the off-set and what is mass produced by machine. The artist makes an image or sketch and then it is produced as a print in a strictly controlled edition. Sometimes the edition is only one. This is called a monoprint. In other cases 10 or 50 identical prints are made and signed before the



Petra, published by FG Moon, 1842, London, signed by David Roberts

plate is destroyed.

Modern day artists number their lithographs. Thus when we observe the notation 2/100, this means this is the second lithograph out of a total of 100. Of course, the smaller the number, the better the quality. Original prints are identified through careful editioning and their value is assessed by it. Such a print is not a cheap

offset or photocopy of a precious original, but an art form conceived as an etching or an engraving or an eau-forte. It is a form of art in its own right.

The 1842 F.G. Moon Roberts edition was the first record of the Holy Land to be presented to the British public at a time when Islamic architecture was still little known and was beginning

to attract attention in Europe.

Many editions followed in both England and the Continent in the 1860's and even in the United States in the 1870's and 1880's. The interest in Roberts has not abated and new printings continue to this day in the form of not only reproductions but postcards, greeting cards and calendars.

Bulgarian art gets a look in

By Koffi Attah
Special to The Star

It's not often that art exhibitions portray messages already cemented in the minds of art lovers. Unlike most, the exhibition of modern Bulgarian art, now in progress at the Balkan Art Gallery, seeks to foster and promote friendship and cultural ties between Bulgaria and Jordan.

"Bulgaria wants to show the rich cultural heritage of Jordan to the Bulgarian people. A Bulgarian TV crew will soon be in Jordan to film Jordan's cultural treasures," said Mr. Lubomir Todorov, the Bulgarian Ambassador to Jordan.

The exhibition features 57 art pieces by 25 renowned Bulgarian artists who have exhibited their works in various parts of the world. The exhibition is jointly organized by the Balkan Art Gallery, and the Inter-Art Foundation in Bulgaria and it's under the patronage of Dr. Qasem Abu Ein, the minister of culture.

The methodical and systematic selection of art works by a group of Bulgarian artists aims to erase the dark clouds and misconceptions about modern Bulgaria. Some years ago Bulgaria was a communist state, today the story is different, and the country seems finally to have democratized not only in the arts and cultural fields but in the rest of society.

One particularly clear example is presented by professor Todor Dinov in his painting 'UFO 11', a lithography painted in 1994 which costs JD 150. He displays an admirable mastery of the massive use of geometric contours, cube-like shapes to design modern skyscrapers, evidence, and a confession that modern Bulgaria has dissociated itself from the communist past. Another work by the same painter 'Ancient Theatre' is another lithography painted in 1994 and sells for JD 170. It is a theatre building with a lot of theatre goers in the background. This may mean freedom of expression.

Professor Dinov, born in 1919, graduated from the Art Academy in Sofia in 1943. He is considered as the father of Bulgarian cartoon movies.

In the inner section of the Gallery are paintings that focusing on the faith and spirituality of Bulgarians. 'Madoona' and 'Icon' are ceramic works by Atanas Gadjev made in 1997, each piece goes for JD 150. 'Madoona' shows baby Jesus and Mary in the foreground, with three

wise men from the east in the background. 'Icon', at the far top is fish designed in ceramic with architectural motifs.

As noted in the Exhibition hall, the subject matter and style of Gadjev's ceramic works is almost the same, those of the spiritual world. All the ceramic works on display are his creation.

Margarita Vaynova works on the other hand are inherently tainted with her love for nature. Both the intensity and the target of her oil on canvas and water colour paintings shift from

place to place evolve mostly around nature. 'Sea Bottom' is an oil on canvas painted in 1995 and sells at JD 150 JD. It simply portrays the sea and the sky. Fish in form of leaves are being overlooked by the bright, blue sky. The only four oil and water color paintings at the exhibition belongs to her. Born in 1952, she has held many exhibitions in Australia, France, Russia, Turkey, USA etc.

One of the most striking paintings, 'we both live together', is a coloured effort by Miroslav Kenarov, in 1995. At JD 320, it is the most expensive at the exhibit.

It presents a man and a woman in a setting that communicates a feeling of mutual love. An unusual link between the different styles of the exhibition, is that between Gadjev and Professor Borislav Stoev. The latter illustrates in his 'Pastoral' and 'Centaur' are strong erotic works. Both paintings are colour lithography just like the rest of his works in the exhibition. 'Pastoral' portrays a man on a horse hack blowing a flute with two naked women in festive mood. His other painting 'Centaur' is taking a girl' shows a naked woman being carried away by a centaur.

Another color lithography work is by Professor Borislav Neykov. 'Struggle' shows two bulls fighting to death, this is far from the erotic nature of Stoev's works. Small, tightly packed forms in muted colors spiked with thin black lines is seen in 'The Etat' by Roman Skorchev, depicting a woman with a baby in her womb. Zlatka Dabova's wood carving displays a beautiful innocent woman.

In general, the exhibition of Modern Bulgarian Art is a quietly emphasized by the impressive selection of works by the best 25 Bulgarian Artists. From every angle the admirable exhibits will win the heart of anyone with special interest in Bulgarian Arts. It continues till 5 January.

One voice for nature

THE MANAGEMENT and staff of Hotel Inter Continental Jordan visited The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) on Monday 15th December 1997 where they adopted three endangered animals, an Ibis, an Ostrich and a Gazelle. This action was a part of the 12 Days before Christmas activities.

The participants were briefed on the activities of the RSCN, and a slide show was presented showing the various natural run by the Society.

Mr. Kees Heuveling, Executive Assistant Manager of Hotel Inter Continental Jordan thanked the members of the RSCN for their warm welcome and emphasized on the importance of working together to create an environmental awareness amongst the people working in the tourism industry especially Hotel Inter Continental staff.



Ambassador presents certificates



THE BRITISH Ambassador, Mr. Christopher Batterscombe, came to the British Council last week to present certificates to successful British Council students who had passed their course and exams. The certificates were the University of Cambridge First Certificate in English, and Certificate in Advanced English. There were also certificates for teachers who had successfully completed their training course in Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

Around 70 students and their relatives attended the ceremony, and afterwards there was a chance to meet the Ambassador over tea and

coffee, and many students had the opportunity to talk to him. Also in attendance was the Director of the British Council, Jordan, Dr. David Burton, the Manager of the Language Centre Mr. Hector Low, and the Director of Studies Mr. Mike Coney. The students were also very pleased that their teachers had also come along to see the culmination of all of their hard work; Mrs. Anna Obeldat, Mrs. Christine Barakat, and Mrs. Debbie Critchley.

The evening was a great success and will be remembered by everyone who came for a long time to come.

THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



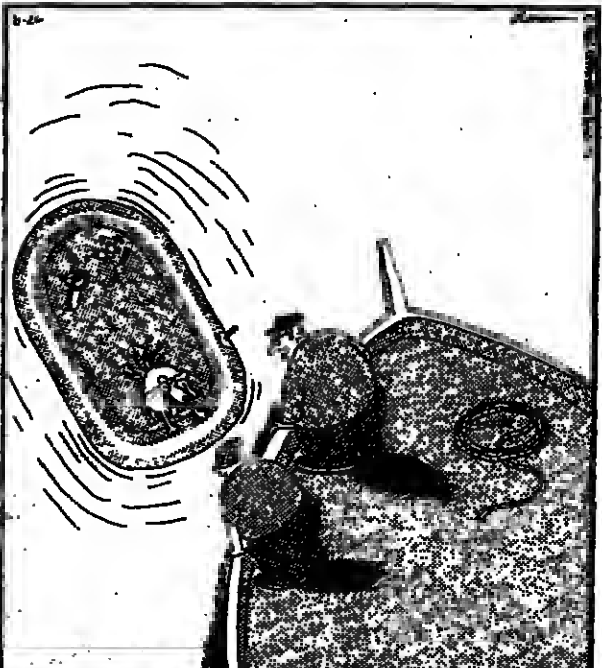
"In fact, you like to build fires, don't you, Mr. Pig? Building fires and burning wild animals a pastime of yours, Mr. Pig? Did you know my client is an endangered species, Mr. Pig, while you yourself are nothing more than a walking side of ham?"



At the professional stick chaser's training camp.



Simultaneously all three went for the ball, and the coconut-like sound of their heads colliding secretly delighted the bird.



"Hey, boy! How ya doin'?" ... Look at him, Dan. Poor guy's been floating out here for days but he's still just as fat and happy as ever."

For Sale

Original Lithographs by David Roberts. Views of Jerusalem, Petra, Lebanon and Holy Land. Also 19th century engravings by WH Bartlett. For information Telefax: 664805

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DECEMBER 1997

A special section offering
fresh perspectives on
global issues prepared for
The Star

THE WORLD PAPER

PRINTED IN SIX LANGUAGES
ON FIVE CONTINENTS



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'What have you done for me lately,' voters ask

Monopolists let Pandora out of the ballot box

In another age, it was said that all roads lead to Rome. In this century, it could be said that all votes led to the Party of the Institutional Revolution. Or the Congress party. Or the Liberal Democratic Party. These parties, and others, have managed to monopolize power for decades within democratic frameworks. But, buffeted by the aftershocks created by the collapse of a true political monopoly—communism—their grip is weakening

By Malvika Singh

THE POLITICAL platform that united India in the war against colonialism was the Congress party. It was, truly, a congress of all groups that had a one-point agenda: independence from Great Britain.

Five decades have passed since that independence was won, and agendas have changed. So has the Congress party. It has split, splintered—and today sits on the opposition benches of India's parliament. How did a monolith, which controlled India for 28 of the first 30 years after independence, come to be in this position?

The tide began to turn against the Congress party in 1975, when Indira Gandhi declared a state of emergency following a court ruling that indicted her for electoral malpractice. In the aftermath—which included the Shah Commission's revelations—Indians started to learn what had gone on for nearly 30 years: that the essence of their constitution had been subverted by dictatorial leaders who operated within the framework of democracy. Instead of decentralizing power to the states, the Congress party centralized it and imperiously held the states to ransom. New Delhi wielded the whip and created puppet ministers who owed their allegiance to that omnipresent, centralizing power.

As Indians came to realize how ruthless and unaccountable that power had been, they overwhelmingly repudiated it at the polls—thus confirming a shift had been under-

way since Gandhi took power.

During the reign of Gandhi, daughter of the revered Jawaharlal Nehru, the Congress party ceased to have internal elections for party posts. Invariably, the leadership would issue a "whip" to the rank-and-file when any vote of consequence reached the floor of parliament. The party became emasculated, most of its members unable to reflect the views of their constituents.

As the Congress party focused in-



Everywhere you look, the Congress party—India after independence

ward, it opened the door for other national parties to assert their presence. An intrinsically democratic people began to look for new agendas, a message the arrogant Congress party was con-

ditioned to ignore.

The fast-growing middle class was the first constituency the Congress party, by taking it for granted, lost. This largely urban group became the foundation of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which wrestled away the mantle of "nationalism" from the Congress party and used it to attract a middle and upper class Hindu constituency.

This stands in contrast to the Congress party which, as it was originally constituted, represented neither the polarized positions of the Left or the Right. It was a party that believed in consensus, one that could absorb a diversity of views that no ideology-based party could cope with. That was its strength, and that was what made it an acceptable monolith.

When the Congress party's fabric was frayed, and later torn, its constituents deserted it for smaller national parties or even regional parties. Muslim supporters felt betrayed by a series of events and some careless legislation designed to appease the Hindu fundamentalists, and this voting bloc began to disintegrate as well.

Other factors were at work. In addition to a maturing electorate who understood the costs of the Congress party's arrogant, dictatorial mindset, new economic realities emerged. As the evidence became overwhelming that the country's economy must be restructured, the states realized that they would have to compete with each other to attract business, the generator of wealth that was the new key to political power. Centralization only impeded them in pursuing this goal.

Today, chief ministers are concentrating on their states and building up their regional power bases. Priorities have changed. Coalition politics have shown that it is now, rightly, the states-oriented chief ministers who determine who is the prime minister. As a result, true federalism is slowly emerging.

The signs are everywhere. The Dalits and lower castes are asserting their political rights. Autonomy is being sought. For the first time since independence, nearly all of the regional parties are represented in a centrist coalition. Adjusting to the new political realities will take some time, but when this revised system begins to work it should provide the mechanism that will hold India together and prevent military rule of balkanisation.

The Congress party could easily have been the conductor of this new political opera. But it was unwilling to restructure itself and come to terms with the changing environment. Its top leaders are from another era, still carrying the baggage of monopoly politics and a command economy, and their potential successors have made no effort to distance themselves from this outdated thinking.

Unless the Congress party does split again, and in the process redefine itself, it will pass into political oblivion. And it has a good precedent to call upon—it was Gandhi who rejuvenated the party in 1969 when she broke away from its old guard, known then as The Syndicate.

MALVIKA SINGH IS THE ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER OF *Business India*, A NEW DELHI-BASED NEWSMAGAZINE.



Goodbye to all that: murdered PRI presidential candidate Donaldo Colosio could count on the electoral system

A grip on power that most communists can only dream about

Mexico's PRI bends to avoid breaking

By Sergio Sarmiento

WITH THE DEMISE of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mexico's Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) became the second longest ruling party in the world. Only Mongolia's Communist Party has been in power for longer.

The PRI has ruled Mexico uninterrupted since it was founded in 1929 following a bloody, 19-year civil war. A combination of electoral fraud and an adroit use of government money and influence has kept it in power.

Things are changing, albeit slowly. In the 1960s and 1970s the PRI consistently won elections with 80 and 90 percent of the official vote. In 1976 its candidate, Jose Lopez Portillo, became the nation's president with an official tally of 100 percent. Traditional PRI operatives fettered these overwhelming victories, but a new generation of foreign-educated politicians knew that Mexico's electoral system had lost all credibility abroad.

The turning point came in 1988. After a prolonged economic crisis Cuauhtemoc Cardenas, whose father Lazaro Cardenas nationalized the oil industry during his presidency 50 years earlier, left the ruling PRI and was nominated by an alliance of small leftist parties as their presidential candidate. The political system used all its resources to defeat the "traitor"—90 percent of all television coverage focused on the PRI's candidate, Carlos Salinas de Gortari. Two close aides of Cardenas's were killed just before the election.

Still, Cardenas was ahead in the vote count early in the evening of July 6, the day of the election, when the electoral computer system mysteriously crashed. Hours later, when the computers began

to work again, the PRI's candidate was now in first place. Salinas eventually won with 51 percent of the (official) vote; Cardenas came in second with 36 percent.

Cardenas's sympathizers have always claimed that their candidate was deprived of a victory in 1988 through massive fraud. It is difficult to decide if they are right, but it is clear that there were enough irregularities to have the election nullified. This did not happen. Salinas became president. But the lingering outrage ensured that the era of single party dominance was over.

Cardenas founded the leftist Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) early in 1989. In July of that year the PRI lost a state election for the first time ever, as Ernesto Ruffo of the conservative National Action Party (PAN) was elected governor of Baja California.

In 1994 the PRI's presidential candidate, Luis Donaldo Colosio, was assassinated at a campaign meeting in Tijuana. The new candidate, Ernesto Zedillo, took the presidency with only 50 percent of the vote in an election widely acknowledged as clean. The final result was widely predicted by public opinion polls and quick counts, which added a measure of credibility to the process.

Still, soon after taking power, Zedillo announced an electoral reform—the fourth in five years—designed to bring about not only clean but fair elections. Negotiations began in early 1995 and ended in late 1996, leading to a new set

of electoral rules which did not leave every party satisfied—in fact, only the ruling PRI approved the final legislation. Under the new rules spending by political parties was limited, restrictions placed on government support of any party and media companies pressured to provide fair coverage of all political candidates.

Although the opposition parties kept on complaining that these reforms did not go as far as they wanted, the fact is they provided a level playing ground during the 1997 mid-term national elections that helped the opposition to its best showing ever. The PRI got only 39 percent of the national vote, with the two main opposition parties, the PRD and the PAN, receiving 26 percent each. For the first time in history the PRI failed to get an absolute majority in the Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of Congress. The opposition parties, although separated by ideological differences, have been brought together by their hatred of the PRI and have thus defeated the ruling party on a number of major issues.

Not all voters took the opportunity to abandon the PRI. This October, for example, voters in the southern, oil-rich state of Tabasco gave the PRI 48 percent of the vote as the party's candidates won all the mayoralities and state legislature districts at stake. The fact that the PRD, the main opposition party in the state, had conducted a series of violent demonstrations apparently led voters to choose the relative tranquillity of the party that

TO AVOID BREAKING PAGE 2

A classic board game also teaches political lessons

Landing on the middle class can cost everything

By Crocker Snow Jr.

MONOPOLY, TO MOST people, is a board game where nirvana is two hotels on the purple-flagged squares. It has a language all of its own: "Buy Park Place for \$400."

"Do not Pass Go. Do Not Collect \$200."

"Donate to the Community Chest." Over 160 million of these games have been sold worldwide since the game first hit the stores at the height of the Great Depression. Parker Brothers Ltd., the game company long located in Salem, Massachusetts that bought the rights to the trademarked game, has licensed it in 43 countries and 26 languages.

As interpreted by Parker Brothers, Monopoly is a business game that stimulate future titans of commerce in the idiom of banking and corraling public works projects or real estate holdings. It is used in business schools and in exotic, on-the-job settings as well. Two Australian entrepreneurs,

some of the first Western businessmen into Hanoi in 1990, used the board game to train their fledgling real estate team. "We played every day at lunch."

At first our Vietnamese associates always bought the waterworks and electric utilities, because that's what a communist would think the most valuable. And so we always won. Soon they began to learn that Park Place was more valuable—after that, our business really took off."

There is a political variety of Monopoly as well. It isn't played out on a board or a financial statement but on a much more human scale. This game is played on a ballot representing the hopes and aspirations of a citizenry (and, when the game's corrupted, real estate divisions). This game rewards those who have been most adept and adroit at corraling votes, co-opting the opposition and maintaining an efficient and effective hold on political power. The rules are very different: "Stifle the opposition and collect \$200."

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► COST EVERYTHING PAGE 2




Japan's voters give LDP a self-destructive mandate

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25 DECEMBER 1997

L E I S U R E

THE STAR 9

The Star's TV GUIDE

Programs on JTV from 27 Dec- 3 Jan.

ENGLISH PROGRAMS

SATURDAY
2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—Twinkle
2:30—Muppet Show
3:00—The Ultimate Stuntman
4:00—Beakman's World
4:30—Neighbors
5:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Perspective
8:00—Perfect Strangers
8:30—Prison
9:10—Time Trax
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Feature Film
12:00—Ellen

SUNDAY
2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—The Pink Panther
2:30—Johnny Quest
3:00—Energy Express
4:00—American Chart Show
4:30—Tarzan
6:00—French Programs
7:00—News in French
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Kate and Allie
8:00—Cinema, Cinema
8:30—Submarines
9:10—Renegade
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—North & South
11:10—The Jewel in the Crown

MONDAY
2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—The Show With the Mouse
2:30—Hammerman
3:00—Gillette Sports Special
3:15—Riding High
3:30—Animal Show
4:00—Oliver Twist
4:30—Neighbors
5:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Murphy Brown
8:00—The Health Show
8:30—Baby on 5
9:10—Highlander
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Emergency Room (E.R.)



Time Trax, Saturday at 9:10

11:15—Cosmos (Doc.)

TUESDAY
2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—Sandocan
2:30—C.R.O.
3:00—SkiDoo
3:30—The Album Show
4:30—Square One TV
5:15—French Programs
7:00—News in French
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—You Bet Your Life
8:00—Skeleton Coast
8:30—Encounter
9:10—Hollywood Remembers
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Margaret Volant
11:15—Scarlet and Black

WEDNESDAY
2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—Johnny Quest
2:30—Art Box
3:00—Spellbinder
3:30—The Monsters Today
4:00—Border Town
4:30—Neighbors
5:00—French Programs
7:00—News in French
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—High Tech Culture
8:00—Step by Step
8:30—Challenges
9:10—Kong Fu
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—The Sculptures
11:15—The Ginger

THURSDAY
2:00—Holy Koran

Amman cinemas

- Galleria I (Tel: 079 33430): George Of The Jungle
- Galleria II (Tel: 079 33430): Air Force One
- Philadelphia I (Tel: 634149): The Peacemaker
- Philadelphia II (Tel: 634149): Another 9-1/2 Weeks
- Plaza (Tel: 699238): Al Maseer (Arabic)
- Concord I (Tel: 677420): Conspiracy Theory
- Concord II (Tel: 677420): Mr. Bean

2:10—Peter Rabbit
2:30—My Little Fairy Tale
3:00—Americas Funniest People
3:40—He Shoots He Scores
5:00—French Programs
7:00—News in French
7:30—News Headlines
4:00—National Geographic
4:30—The Prince & The Pauper
5:00—French Programme
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Trivial Pursuit
8:00—The Parenthood
8:30—Lois & Clark
9:10—Oprah Winfrey
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Feature Film
12:00—Music Show

FRIDAY
2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—The Adventure of Teddy Ruxpin
2:30—Fred And Barney
3:00—Wish Bone
3:30—Lucky Luke
4:00—Family Matters
4:30—Natural Wonders of Europe
5:00—French Programme
7:00—News in French
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Life on the Internet
8:00—Are you Being Served
8:30—Adventures of Brisco County
9:10—Hrizon
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Best Seller
11:30—Feature Film

PROGRAMMES EN FRANÇAIS
SAMEDI
5:00—Bêtes pas Bêtes
5:15—Regarde le monde
5:30—Secrets de famille
6:00—Le journal

7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine L'unif de Colomb
DIMANCHE
5:00—Micro Kids
5:15—Regarde le monde
5:30—Secrets de famille
6:00—Magazine Fant pas rêver
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine pour tous Ziva
LUNDI
5:00—Bêtes pas Bêtes
5:15—Regarde le monde
5:30—Secrets de famille
6:00—Thalassa
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine scientifique Cinq sur cinq

MARDI
5:00—Bêtes pas Bêtes
5:15—Regarde le monde
5:30—Secrets de famille
6:00—Savoir plus santé
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Orient sur Seine
MERCREDI
5:00—Micro kids
5:15—Regarde le monde
5:30—Qui est qui
6:00—Ushuaia
7:00—Le journal
7:15—E = M6
JEUDI
5:00—Un jour, une fête
5:30—Le monde est à vous
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Le dessous des cartes

VENREDI
5:30—Le juge Cordier
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine Allo la terre

Programs are subject to change by JTV

FASHION



Rifat Ozbek



Jacob Marc

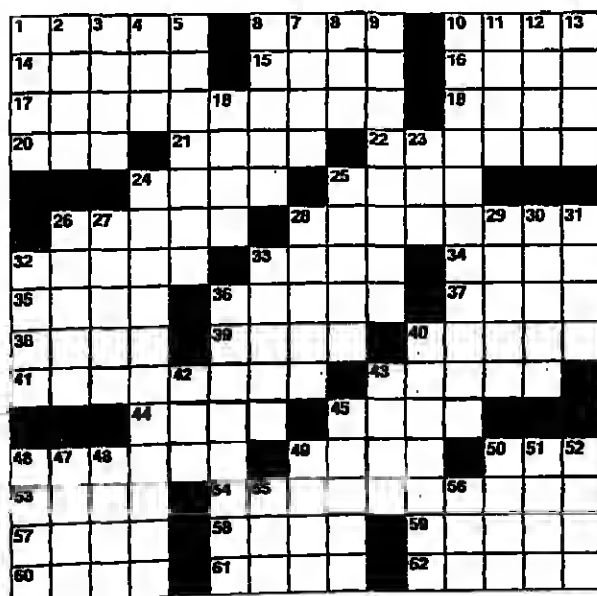


Calvin Klein



Ellen Tracy

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- ACROSS**
1 Courage
8 Over
10 Moran or Gray
14 Happen
15 Spear of old
16 "but the brave..."
17 Extraordinary
19 Winter Vidal
20 Dawn
21 godless
21 Australasian parrot
22 Shoe
24 Supply with too many sweets
25 Self-satisfied
26 Expressed
28 Musical play
32 Mr. Bond
33 Partition
34 Poetic time
35 Touched
- DOWN**
1 Cornedien
2 Repeat
3 Expert
4 alman
5 Complete
6 Relative of me-toolen
7 Uppulian
8 Riser to the Voige
9 in wild haste
10 Appointment
11 Housestop
12 Concerning
13 At no time, to poets
18 Frame of mind
23 A possessive
24 Ponder
25 Divide
26 Clayey
27 Cat—talks
28 Fertile region
29 Complete
30 Pressure—
31 English queen
32 Seasoning
33 Pale
34 Minimize
40 Steals a child
42 Eve call
43 Sour
45 Director Frank
46 Connecticut school
47 Desire personified
48 English elevator
49 Give off
50 Explosive device
51 Jockeyed
52 Crisp cookies
55 Corrode
58 Ret-

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THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPE

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: The moon is in Cancer. Pisces people will be especially lucky.

Aries (March 21-April 19). People will be ruled by their emotions. Sports activities should go very well, although there's a little more work involved than you like.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). Your partner is your best coach. He or she has some brilliant insights. Romance blossoms. Make time for an attractive friend.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). Money is a major issue. If you work, you'll get it. If you don't, you won't. Also, show you can be frugal. That's especially important now.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). You're strong. You're also vivacious, intelligent and good-looking. Be careful with your money. Don't spend it all on love. You could learn quite a lot.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). Finish up old business. Pay off old debts. The moon will be in your sign, giving you the extra touch of class you need.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You should do pretty well. Your friends come through just in the nick of time. You're under pressure. Although you may be right, the other person outranks you.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You've got too many places to be and too many people demanding your time. Besides, one of your supervisors is being a real jerk.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Go for a drive or long bike ride. You'll enjoy a change of scene. An extra assignment virtually wipes out your social life. Conditions do get better, though.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Start by paying off a bill you owe. You can do it through private negotiations. The action's fast and furious, with a slightly syncopated rhythm. You're strong, but you have authority figure problems. It's a learning experience.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). A team effort works. You'll do fine together. Pay bills. Also, figure out how you're going to get the funding you want for a big project. Do the research and you might find yourself a loan.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). There's too much work and not enough sympathy from your boss. He or she seems to think you can do anything and everything. Share the load. A stalemate prompts you to get on to other things.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). You have all the luck in the world. Things won't be nearly as nice soon. Even previously easy tasks will be difficult. Don't worry, all this practice is making you stronger. You'll start getting luckier in love.

If You're Having a Birthday This Week: You'll get a chance to broaden your horizons this year. Take it. Let an attractive person draw you out of your shell. It'll be fun.

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SUCCESS WITHOUT HONOR IS AN UNSEASONED DISH; IT WILL SATISFY YOUR HUNGER, BUT IT WON'T TASTE GOOD.

SLAPSTIX

Breaks balance out. The sun don't shine on the same old dog's rear end every day.

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Movies

ABDOON GALLERIA THEATRES



TONIGHT

GALLERIA 1 هاتف خلوي ٧٩٣٣٤٣٠ GALLERIA 2

GEORGE OF THE JUNGLE

AIR FORCE ONE



3:30 / 6:00 / 8:15 / 10:45



3:30 / 6:30 / 8:30 / 10:30

The Star

<http://www.arabia.com/Star>

Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

Ramadan

Le croissant indécis

30 ou 31 décembre ? Le début du jeûne dépend de l'apparition de la lune. Pour savoir, la Jordanie compte surtout sur l'Arabie Saoudite.

Entre le calendrier hégirien (lunaire) et le grégorien (solaire), il y a un décalage annuel de 11 jours. Une réalité astronomique qui explique la variation de la période du Ramadan, le neuvième mois du calendrier musulman. Chaque année, le Ramadan arrive dix ou onze jours en avance par rapport à l'année précédente. A cause de ce déplacement dans le temps, il peut avoir lieu en toutes saisons.

La vision du croissant de la nouvelle lune dans son neuvième mois est le seul signe indicatif du commencement du jeûne. Cette année, tous les pays musulmans le guetteront à partir du 29 décembre. Trois hypothèses : premièrement, on observe le croissant le 29. Le premier jour du Ramadan sera donc le 30. Deuxièmement, on le voit le 30, ce qui reporte le début du jeûne au 31. Troisièmement, la lune est capricieuse et ne veut pas se montrer. Alors l'arabisme, le premier jour du Ramadan sera fixé au 31 décembre car les mois lunaires se composent de 30 jours seulement.

Les calculs effectués depuis plus de deux mois par l'Association jordanienne d'Astronomie déterminent le 31 comme point de départ du Ramadan : «D'après nos estimations, ce sera difficile voire impossible d'observer le croissant lunaire le 29 décembre.

Cette nuit-là, la lune se couchera avant le soleil. Dans ce cas, l'Agence de la nouvelle lune n'aura pas lieu. Ainsi le 30 décembre ne peut être astronomiquement le début du Ramadan», explique Mouhammad Odeh, un des responsables de l'association.

Cependant, cette conclusion n'est pas définitive pour le Ministère des Affaires isla-

miques. Tout d'abord, l'Islam s'intéresse peu aux calculs des astronomes et compte surtout sur l'observation de n'importe quel Jordanien (sous certaines conditions, voir plus loin) : ensuite, la Jordanie compte souvent sur le gnet mené par l'Arabie Saoudite et adopte sa décision. «Les deux pays sont voisins et ont presque la même heure du coucher de soleil. Pour cette raison, le royaume hachémite fait généralement confiance au témoignage de l'Arabie Saoudite», précise un des responsables du Ministère des Affaires islamiques. D'autant plus cette année. La ligue mondiale islamique a en effet décidé d'utiliser le centre télescopique ultramoderne de l'Arabie Saoudite pour repérer la lune dans le ciel encombré de l'hiver. Mais rien ne garantit le succès de l'opération.

Quoi qu'il en soit, dans tout le royaume et d'abord dans les régions les plus élevées (Ajloun, Wadi Sir ou Sweilch à Amman...), des centaines de personnes se mettront à l'affût du fameux croissant lunaire : sur les toits, les minarets, à l'œil nu ou au télescope. Il faut néanmoins remplir quelques critères pour avoir le droit de témoigner : être majeur, musulman et... sensé. L'heureux observateur se rend alors au tribunal religieux pour prêter serment et certifier avoir vu le croissant du Ramadan.

Ensuite la bonne nouvelle est diffusée à la télévision et à la radio par le grand juge et dans les haut-parleurs des mosquées par les muezzins. Satisfait et béat, les gens se congratulent vivement : une ambiance euphorique qui dure jusqu'au repas de l'aube, le premier sahour.

Nahed Al-Khlout

Noël : une histoire de Romains par Véronique Abu-Nijmeh

Noël est peut-être la fête chrétienne la plus riche en traditions. Nombre d'entre elles cependant remontent au-delà de la culture chrétienne. L'introduction de la fête de Noël dans le cycle liturgique est en effet relativement tardive. Précédée en Orient de l'Épiphanie, qui commémore l'adoration des Rois Mages, la naissance de Jésus et son baptême, Noël apparaît à Rome au IV^e siècle après Jésus-Christ pour se répandre peu à peu dans l'est méditerranéen. Il dérive de deux fêtes romaines distinctes. Fin décembre, aux environs du solstice d'hiver se célébraient à Rome les Saturnales, festivités liées aux rites de fécondité qui prélaient à la renaissance du cycle annuel et à l'ascendance du soleil. On honorait Saturne, le dieu des grains enfouis dans la terre. Par certains côtés, les Saturnales affichaient un aspect carnavalesque : les valeurs sociales étaient renversées, toute licence admise. Les esclaves étaient libérés le temps des réjouissances et se faisaient servir par leurs maîtres. Les familles

se rendaient visite et échangeaient des cadeaux. La seconde fête est celle de la «naissance du Soleil invaincu», instituée en 274 ap. JC. par l'empereur Aurélien. Cette fête solaire en son honneur est l'aboutissement de l'évolution du culte de sa personnalité. Aurélien en fixe la date le 25 décembre, jour exact du solstice d'hiver selon le calendrier romain. En choisissant cette même date pour la célébration de Noël, les chrétiens reprenaient à leur compte l'image du «Soleil vaincu» en l'appliquant au Christ souvent qualifié de «lumière du monde». De là vient le faste lumineux de la fête. Les Saturnales ont transmis certains types de décorations, tels les guirlandes, ainsi que leur caractère convivial et la coutume des présents. Quant aux rites de fécondité, ils sont bien présents au travers d'ornements comme le houx et le gui qui produisent leurs fruits en hiver et surtout par le sapin qui reste verdoyant au plus froid de la saison, bien qu'il soit d'origine nordique et non pas romaine !

Palestiniens

Réfugiés mais accrocs à leur école

On dit souvent que les Palestiniens sont une population très éduquée. Qu'en est-il exactement des réfugiés dans les camps du royaume hachémite ? Que peut-on dire du niveau scolaire dans les écoles de l'Unrwa par rapport aux établissements gouvernementaux ?



Dans le camp de Zarqa. Malgré les classes surpeuplées, les enfants gardent leur motivation. Près de 30% d'entre eux poursuivront leurs études à l'université.

éducatives sont à portée de bus de la plupart des principaux camps de réfugiés palestiniens. De plus, même si l'Unrwa manque encore de places pour accueillir tous les enfants de réfugiés, les salles de classes

sont généralement bien équipées et beaucoup d'établissements disposent de matériel informatique. Il y a aussi l'exemple des grands frères, ceux qui ont réussi. Quand dans une famille de huit enfants, l'aîné poursuit des études brillantes à l'université, il devient un exemple à suivre. Aujourd'hui 30% des réfugiés Palestiniens se retrouvent en fac après leur tawjihi (l'équivalent du bac français).

Cependant ce chiffre ne suffit pas pour dire que les Palestiniens ont un meilleur niveau scolaire que les Transjordaniens. Tout d'abord, les Palestiniens des camps ne représentent qu'un tiers de la population palestinienne totale en Jordanie. Ensuite, si entre eux les élèves savent d'où ils viennent, les statistiques des écoles gouvernementales ne font pas la différence entre Palestiniens et Jordaniens pure souche. Il ne faut

(décorateur, électricien, charpentier...). Or les élèves des deux collèges gérés par l'Unrwa réussissent mieux que ceux qui dépendent de l'Etat ou de l'armée : 97,2% de réussite à l'examen final dans les deux premiers contre seulement 74% dans le reste du pays. Bien entendu, le recrutement de ces deux collèges à Amman et à Wadi Sir s'adresse avant tout aux Palestiniens, même si le critère du niveau scolaire est d'abord pris en compte.

École normale

Doit-on en conclure que les Palestiniens issus des camps de réfugiés ont un niveau scolaire supérieur à celui des Jordaniens ? Aucun chiffre ne nous permet de l'affirmer. Surtout que les deux collèges ne comptent qu'environ 2250 étudiants.

Reste cette formidable motivation, tant chez les élèves que chez les professeurs. «Les enseignants n'ont pas l'impression d'avoir des étudiants en face d'eux, mais corrément des membres de leur famille», explique Omar Ghawen, responsable du secteur éducatif de l'Unrwa en Jordanie. En outre, «l'Unrwa a mis très tôt l'accent sur la formation des professeurs», explique le chercheur Jean-Christophe Augé.

Il est vrai que depuis deux ans, l'Agence des Nations Unies a mis en place dans la capitale jordanienne une sorte d'école normale, l'Education Science Faculty (ESF). Une première dans le royaume hachémite. But de la manœuvre : obtenir des professeurs de haut niveau pour les écoles de l'Unrwa. Ainsi près de 900 enseignants passent à la moulinette élitiste de cet institut : un tiers en formation initiale, le

143.207 élèves

Environ 2,6 millions de réfugiés palestiniens répartis dans plusieurs pays de la région. Plus de la moitié, 1,36 millions, vivent en Jordanie. Cette population réfugiée reçoit une aide de l'Unrwa, l'Agence des Nations Unies sous forme d'une assistance sanitaire, scolaire et sociale. L'éducation reste le secteur prioritaire de l'agence puisqu'elle occupe près de 50% du budget total de l'agence. «Le but principal de notre organisation a toujours été l'éducation de nos enfants», assure énergiquement Omar Ghawen, le directeur du programme éducation de l'Unrwa en Jordanie. Lui-même est un réfugié palestinien.

Dans le royaume hachémite, l'agence compte 202 écoles, 143.207 élèves et 3973 professeurs, pour l'année scolaire en cours. L'enseignement est gratuit.

reste, des professeurs déjà en poste, en formation continue. La faculté ne recrute évidemment que parmi les Palestiniens.

Enfin les parents jouent aussi un rôle important dans la réussite de leurs enfants. Pour eux, l'éducation est la meilleure arme pour lutter intelligemment contre son destin. C'est en tout cas l'avis d'une maman palestinienne à la sortie des classes dans le camp de Baqa'a : «L'éducation est un héritage que je peux laisser à mes enfants car ça, personne ne pourra le leur enlever».

Aminah Ishtay

Nouvelles du Pays

Noël en Jordanie

Les enfants font la loi

Comme en France, les familles (essentiellement chrétiennes) ne peuvent couper à la tradition des cadeaux pour le plus grand bonheur des bambins et des commerçants.

Selon les Anglais, «la seule différence entre un enfant et un adulte c'est le prix du jouet». Associés à Noël, les jouets sont devenus incontournables. Dès que Noël approche, on se précipite dans les magasins. «L'échange de cadeaux existe depuis longtemps, affirme Nawal, femme au foyer, il y a quelques années on en achetait pour tout le monde, les grands, les petits et même les

bébé. La famille se réunissait la veille de Noël pour célébrer la fête et ouvrir les cadeaux. Aujourd'hui, on suit la même tradition mais d'une manière un peu différente car les familles sont plus grandes. Reste qu'on offre toujours des cadeaux à nos enfants qui se sont mariés et à leurs enfants».

Noël occupe une place toute particulière dans le cœur des enfants, loin devant leur anniversaire. Ils croient dur comme fer au Père Noël et s'ils se sont bien conduits ou s'ils ont eu des

bonnes notes à l'école, ils exigent des jouets exceptionnels. «Je me prépare pour Noël un mois à l'avance, avec Jihad, à vrai dire, Noël m'inspire. C'est devenu une sorte de fête plus commerciale que spirituelle. Je n'ai jamais su dire non à mes enfants et s'ils choisissent un jouet de qualité qui convient à leur âge, je le leur achète».

Cependant de nombreuses familles y regardent à deux fois avant d'acquiescer à leur porte-monnaie. «Les jouets sont excessivement chers, constate Khaled, père de trois enfants, l'année dernière, c'était la mode des voitures Radio Shacks. Mes enfants ont insisté pour que je leur en achète. J'en ai pris trois : la première à 63 dinars, la deuxième à 54 dinars et la troisième à 30 dinars, et encore après une réduction de 60%. Cette année, l'un d'eux m'a demandé un Lego. Un original coûte 100 dinars environ. La contrepartie, c'est de le laisser à la maison».

«Il est presque impossible de trouver un jouet à moins de 20 JD», Khaled, père de trois enfants, cherche quelque chose de très bon marché, que tu n'as pas même pas offrir à tes enfants. En France, deuxième marché du jouet en Europe derrière l'Allemagne, un ménage dépense autour de 2000 francs

(250 JD) de joujou par enfant et par an.

Le même Khaled estime par ailleurs qu'aucun contrôle n'est exercé sur les jouets : «Le gouvernement permet l'importation de toutes sortes de jouets, dangereux ou pas».

De leur côté, les commerçants se frottent les mains puisque le volume des ventes augmente de 80% pendant Noël. «Tout le monde se trouve obligé d'acheter des cadeaux, explique l'un d'eux, même les parents sans ressources optent pour des cadeaux symboliques, quitte à offrir une petite voiture en plastique». Il est vrai que l'expression de joie sur le visage d'un enfant ouvrant ses cadeaux est un moment inoubliable.

Rana Kavar-Bagaean

Le Père Noël aux mille visages

Tradition populaire, fête religieuse ou célébration païenne, Noël reste la fête la plus populaire en Europe. Dans la plupart des pays d'Europe, le 24 décembre est considéré comme le jour férié. Noël reste une fête essentiellement familiale, liée au repas, aux cadeaux, aux guirlandes, aux lanternes, aux crèches, aux lanternes, aux crèches, aux lanternes. Le caractère religieux est plus important dans les pays musulmans. Les Espagnols, les Italiens, les Portugais restent très fidèles à la messe de minuit et préfèrent attendre le jour de l'Épiphanie (le 6 janvier) pour se donner des cadeaux.

En France, on s'offre les cadeaux le matin du 25 décembre. Le sympathique Père Noël s'est substitué progressivement au bon Saint Nicolas pour gâter les enfants. En Espagne, ce sont les Rois mages qui s'en chargent. Ils sont plus nombreux : 3 Rois mages. Le Père Noël est une figure du Nord, un peu barbu, un peu sorcier. Dans la mythologie scandinave, c'est un être sortant d'un vieux baril, qui fait office de Saint Nicolas et distribue des cadeaux de Noël aux enfants.

Le Jourdain



Le Père Noël peut toujours rêver. Les jouets ne profitent pas des réductions d'hiver.

Où sont passés les ours en peluche ?

Les concepteurs des premiers ordinateurs électroniques des années 40 se doutaient-ils de ce que deviendraient leurs monstres qui possédaient alors plusieurs tonnes, occupaient l'espace d'un laboratoire entier et n'étaient guère plus puissants qu'une calculatrice d'écolier moderne ? Sans doute pouvaient-ils prévoir que leurs machines allaient devenir plus petites, plus fiables et plus pratiques. Cependant ils ne soupçonnaient certainement pas qu'à la fin de ce millénaire, les ordinateurs feraient partie de la photo de famille, au pied de l'arbre de Noël.

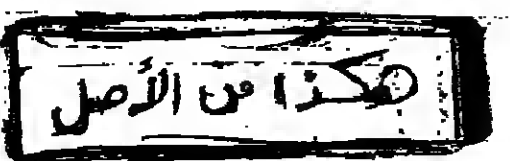
Depuis quelques années déjà les ordinateurs ou PC ont débordé du cadre professionnel. Les foyers équipés d'un PC sont de plus en plus nombreux et

les ordinateurs sont aujourd'hui une idée-cadeau presque ordinaire pour les fêtes de fin d'année. En Jordanie comme en Europe, cette micro-mania est récente mais ne cesse de progresser. Par rapport à d'autres cadeaux qui peuvent parfois décevoir, l'ordinateur fait généralement l'unanimité. Surtout qu'au-delà de la machine de base, il existe tout un tas d'accessoires et d'équipements : imprimantes couleur, jeux sur CD-Rom, enceintes acoustiques à faire pâillir d'envie plus d'un mélomane, joystick pour simulation de vol, souris sans fil à infrarouges, modems ultra-rapides pour explorer Internet. Le Père Noël a que l'embaras du choix.

La vente de ces accessoires à Amman est multi-

pliée par trois en décembre. L'essor de la messagerie électronique (e-mail) y est pour beaucoup. Les gens ont de plus en plus recours à ce réseau fiable, infiniment plus rapide et même moins onéreux que le courrier classique. A condition d'être équipé d'un PC, d'un modem et d'être abonné à un serveur Internet. Bref, après deux ou trois Noël, on peut devenir un cybernaute averti et très bien équipé. Le Père Noël lui-même s'est mis à la page. Pour mieux répondre à tout le courrier électronique des enfants, il envisage sérieusement l'achat d'un modem plus performant.

Jean-Claude Étias





James Bond is back in franchise that never dies

By Kenneth Turan

HOLLYWOOD—There's no advertising tagline on "Tomorrow Never Dies," the new James Bond film, but an accurate one might be "Never wake a sleeper. Especially one that's turning a nice profit."

As the latest film in a series that dates back to "Dr. No" in 1962, a run of 18 pictures that has earned an estimated \$2.5 billion in admissions, "Tomorrow Never Dies" is very aware of its position as the latest incarnation of one of the most lucrative franchises in movie history.

This self-consciousness means more than licensing so many products—oatmeal, please, the BMW car, the Dunhill cigarette lighter, the Omega watch and the Ericsson phone, to name a few—that you half expect Bond to appear covered with a sea of corporate logos like a successful Formula One driver. It also mandates that considerable time and effort go toward keeping things the same as they've always been.

So even though the Bond song is now sung by Sheryl Crow instead of Shirley Bassey or Nancy Sinatra, change is not apparent or even allowed in most areas of "Tomorrow Never Dies." The film's producers have calculated, no doubt correctly, that in this chaotic world the Bond audience wants things unchanged as much as possible. Who would have thought that what started out as the racy exploits of a suave secret agent would turn into the movies' version of comfort food?

From its derivative title through the Bond-in-an-eyeball logo and the way-familiar Monty Norman theme, a lot of "Tomorrow Never Dies" has a stodgy, beco-there feeling. Agent 007 still prefers martinis shaken not stirred, still makes increasingly tired double entendre remarks, still drives a car that's a weapons arsenal on wheels.

And gadgetmeister Q (Desmond Llewelyn), though looking like he could have served Queen Victoria, is still handing out gizmos to our favorite undercover operative.

Speaking of undercover, "Tomorrow Never Dies" is so old-fashioned in the romantic area it just about wheezes. Bond's tryst with a Scandinavian professor of linguistics is shot in such a determinedly modest way it comes off as quaint more than sexy. And even the concept of blond Scandinavians as the epitome of sexuality has a comforting, retrograde feeling about it.

Veteran director Roger Spottiswoode has tried to pep the old warhorse up, but the combined inertia of all those pictures over 35 years proves hard to budge. The only place where an updating has been successful is in the addition of the lively Michelle Yeoh, one of Hong Kong's top female action stars, as a sidekick for Mr. B.

Though we've never met him before, even the power-mad villain, intent on nothing less than world domination, feels familiar. As written by Bruce Feirstein and played by Jonathan Pryce, Elliot Carver does have a different occupation than the evil types of the past: he's a media mogul, an exaggerated version of Robert Maxwell or Rupert Murdoch, who believes "words are the new weapons" in a battle to control the hearts and minds of

every human being on Earth.

Completely devoted to his credo that "there's no news like bad news," Carver is willing to manufacture events to sell papers and TV time. He and henchman Gupta (Ricky Jay) use computer technology (the all-purpose bogeyman of the moment) to provoke a major diplomatic incident between Britain and China that Carver hopes he can massage into all-out war.

He reckons without the cool intelligence of M (Judi Dench) and the sangfroid of 007 (Pierce Brosnan, once again), who gets assigned to figure out what's up. Fortunately for our side, Carver's wife Pally (Teri Hatcher) is an old, old, acquaintance of Bond's, and it's just a matter of time before he finds out enough to battle for the fate of civilization as we know it.

As noted, Yeoh as Wai Lin, a Chinese operative reluctant at first to join forces with "a decadent agent of a corrupt Western power," is a major asset, as are the elaborate stunts that are one of the series' reasons for being. Also breaking the ironclad bonds of overfamiliarity is the terribly amusing Vincent Schiavelli as Dr. Kaufmann.

"I am not interested in your stupid escapades," a fed up superior says to Bond at one point, but the people who bankroll these films feel otherwise. When it says "James Bond Will Return" at the close of the credits, it's promise you can take to the bank, literally.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

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THE STAR'S WORKSTATION COMPUTING & HIGH TECH NO

Edited by Zeid Nasser

Global One offers ZakNet solution in Jordan, allowing Internet access speeds that are 10 times faster:

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ZAKNET OFFERS a new, exciting service which is Internet through satellite, providing the ability to download information from the Internet through Satellite, directly to your PC.

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Here it should be noted that all ZakNet subscriptions offered by Global One are annual, and offered on a pre-



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Computer & IT companies

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Fully Arabized: Packard Bell Multi Media PC

PACKARD BELL have Arabized their P.B. Navigator Software, so the company's new PCs are a center of information and entertainment that is easy to use and understand.

The machines come equipped with Pentium MMX processors, high speed fax modems of 56600 BPS, radio card to hear background music and remote control to control your PC from a distance instead of using the mouse and much more. The PCs are geared for home use for the whole family. You can make your telephone calls from the machine, send and receive



faxes, record messages through the answering machine, listen to the radio, and all these functions can be running in the background, while you run

your pre-installed packages such as MS Works, MS Publisher, Educational games, Encyclopedias, etc.

The system provides excellent stereo sound for your parties; just put the CD and play it or use the stored songs in your music maker and other pre-installed music on the hard-disk. To top that all, the systems have a very original design and a color coded for easy installation.

ACMSC, Part of N. Nazzal & Sons Group, are the sole distributor of Packard Bell systems in Jordan. They are ready to provide you with a full demo at your convenience. ■

News update

Netscape considers free browser

● It seems like Netscape is planning to offer its browser (Netscape Navigator and Netscape Communicator) for free, to oppose the huge competition from Microsoft Internet Explorer, which is free. This is part of Netscape's

paid basis. The service is delivered within three weeks of subscription.

How to subscribe? Internet through Satellite service is available to all Global Internet customers. To subscribe to the service, contact Global One sales department at (+962 6 685101) or send an e-mail to sales@go.com.jo.

ZakNet's Internet through satellite is just one of the many services that Global One offers to Jordanian Internet users. Global One is the pioneering Internet Service Provider in Jordan, since March 1996.

Global One enjoys a subscriber base of more than 5,000 users. Global One was born of an international alliance between three major telecommunications providers: France Telecom, Deutch Telekom and Sprint. ■

new policy to 'keep it's options open' and it could also be an aggressive move at this time, due to the fact that a court order recently issued prohibits Microsoft from bundling its Internet browser along with its operating system Windows 95.

AOL tops one million outside US

● America Online growing rapidly, with the company recently announcing that its

subscribers from abroad (outside the USA) have topped one million!

America Online, along with its local business partners, manages Internet online services in the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Canada, and Japan. Members in Austria, Switzerland and Sweden are also able to access AOL services and the company has announced plans to launch a service in Australia in 1998.

Talk and see anyone in the world over the Internet: Web Phone

WITH WEBPHONE, an attached camera, you can talk and see anyone else over the Internet as long as they too are using WebPhone, which is a free software.

The main limitation with this free version is that you can only speak for 3 minutes at a time before having to reconnect (which is simple and easy but a bit inconvenient as the company really does want you to register).

If you do decide to register there's a one-time \$49.95 charge that you can easily pay the company, Netscape, by credit card or check.

You then get a personal registration code, and within minutes your WebPhone has all the advanced functions including unlimited talk and video with anyone anywhere in the world, unlimited voice messaging at all times, on-line technical support, four phone line capability, customized music-on-hold, individual messages for individual friends, group conferencing.

Check out WebPhone at address: <http://www.MiddleEastOrg/webphone5.exe> ■

INTERFACE BY ZEID NASSER

Trackpoints and touchpads: Chasing your computer mouse, out of the house

IF YOU'VE recently used a notebook computer, it should be interesting to stop and think of the evolution of pointing devices, from the normal desktop mouse all the way to the amazing trackpoint or touchpad your notebook utilizes.

For users like me, the mouse has been a loyal companion since 1988, and I am yet to give it up for anything else, but I've got to admit that some of the pointing devices I'm experimenting with are very, very 'exotic'.

The trackpoint, in particular, is an amazing device. It looks like a small nub (usually red or black) that sits in the middle of your keyboard, between keys, and provides full mouse-like control by simply touching its tip with your finger.

Instead of swirling your wrist around, or straining your whole arm; all you have to do is skillfully move your finger! It is truly a revolutionary concept, especially if you're tired of your desktop mouse. This nob doesn't feel like a mouse at all. You can't feel as 'emotionally' attached to it as you would to your good old mouse. Once you use the trackpoint, you realize that the lovable mouse, is on its way out.

Another amazing pointing device is the touchpad. It is a pad, offering a square or rectangular area in which you slide your finger around, moving the on-screen pointer as a result. Without a doubt, it feels awkward at first, but you get the hang of it. For most of us computer users who normally slide our hands halfway across a table, clicking away with our index finger; it is a somewhat weird 'sensation' gliding your finger gently across a soft surface and watching an on-screen pointer follow.

Touchpads feel too non-computerized. They feel like an extension of the touch-screen concept which is what most of us would have preferred to begin with! Except, you're not touching the screen, but a pad. In a way, touchpads are easier-to-use than the regular mouse. How many times did you try to familiarize a friend with a mouse, only to realize that they found it difficult to handle at first? With the touchpad, trackpoint or other new devices, people feel, more and more, that they are using extensions of their own limbs.

Moving onto another area of pointing devices, we've got wireless mice, which follow the 'point and shoot' concept. Who needs a cord, when an infra-red transmission can get the job done. Such units have been available for sometime, but haven't caught on to well, probably because of problems in getting them to work from across the room—after all, if it's supposed to work like a TV remote control, what's the point if you can't operate your favorite application on your computer in the bedroom from the bathroom?

Still, wireless technology in the field of pointing devices is developing in such a way, that you find units that look like a cross between a remote control and a mouse along with all the latest Home Entertainment systems that comprise of a computer, TV and video all rolled into one!

What does all of this mean to the good old, standard mouse? Well, in the field of notebook computers it's practically extinct. However, in desktops it still rules. It's simply the cheapest and most popular pointing device. After all these years, the standard mouse still does the trick.

The inventor of the mouse couldn't have imagined the multitude of subsidiary products and developments that would be produced to his/her original idea. But the question remains, and I wish anyone out there could answer it: Why is it called a mouse, in the first place?

The mouse cord looks like a tail, but apart from that I can't see the similarity. Still, they couldn't have called it 'an electronic pointing device that slides across your table'; that is just too, a long name. Actually, come to think of it. The word 'mouse' doesn't seem weird at all. To all mouse users out there, hang onto your electronic rodents and enjoy using them for now. Soon, they'll be replaced by nohs and pads! ■

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European soccer player of the year

PARIS—Winners of the Golden Ball, awarded to the European soccer player of the year:

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- 1958—Raymond Kopa, Real Madrid
- 1959—Alfredo Di Stefano, Real Madrid
- 1960—Luis Suarez, Barcelona
- 1961—Omar Sivori, Juventus of Turin
- 1962—Josef Masopust, Dukla Prague
- 1963—Lev Yashin, Dynamo Moscow
- 1964—Denis Law, Manchester United
- 1965—Eusebio, Benfica of Lisbon
- 1966—Bobby Charlton, Manchester United
- 1967—Florian Albert, Ferencváros
- 1968—George Best, Manchester United
- 1969—Gianpi Rivera, AC Milan
- 1970—Gerd Muller, Bayern Munich
- 1971—Johan Cruyff, Ajax Amsterdam
- 1972—Franz Beckenbauer, Bayern Munich
- 1973—Johan Cruyff, Barcelona
- 1974—Johan Cruyff, Barcelona
- 1975—Oleg Blokhin, Dynamo Kiev
- 1976—Franz Beckenbauer, Bayern Munich
- 1977—Alan Simmons, Borussia Muenchengladbach
- 1978—Kevin Keegan, Hamburg SV
- 1979—Kevin Keegan, Hamburg SV
- 1980—Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, Bayern Munich
- 1981—Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, Bayern Munich
- 1982—Paolo Rossi, Juventus of Turin
- 1983—Michel Platini, Juventus of Turin
- 1984—Michel Platini, Juventus of Turin
- 1985—Michel Platini, Juventus of Turin
- 1986—Igor Belanov, Dynamo Kiev
- 1987—Rued Gullit, AC Milan
- 1988—Marco Van Basten, AC Milan
- 1989—Marco Van Basten, AC Milan
- 1990—Lothar Matthaus, Internazionale of Milan
- 1991—Jean-Pierre Papin, Olympique Marseille
- 1992—Marco Van Basten, AC Milan
- 1993—Roberto Baggio, Juventus of Turin
- 1994—Hristo Stoichkov, Barcelona
- 1995—George Weah, AC Milan
- 1996—Matthias Sammer, Borussia Dortmund
- 1997—Ronaldo, Internazionale of Milan

Ronaldo being recognized as best soccer player in world

ROME—The image of Ronaldo in a smart jacket with a trophy in his hand is likely to become as familiar in the next few weeks as those of the 21-year-old grinning after scoring another goal.

The Brazilian has become the first South American to win the prestigious Golden Ball award for Europe's top footballer of the year from France's Footbal magazine.

The latest honor—which follows his award for World Footballer of the Year in 1996 and European Golden Boot winner for being Europe's top scorer last season—confirms beyond all doubt that he is currently the best player in the world.

He always knew he was destined for success—and that he would achieve it on the soccer pitches of Europe.

Ronaldo, who learned his trade on the city streets of his native Brazil, says the long trip across the Atlantic was obvious for a young South American with no money but plenty of talent.

"I was dry when the first great Brazilian players started to come to Europe, a bit like the Italian immigrants before them, following their dreams," he said recently. "I was 6 years old and I decided I'd come to Europe as soon as I could."

SportSim Ronaldo got his chance 11 years later when he signed for Dutch giants PSV Eindhoven from Belo Horizonte side Cruzeiro, where he had already made his mark with 58 goals in 60 matches.

He made a seamless transition to European soccer, hitting 30 goals in 33 league matches in his one full season in the Netherlands before moving south to Barcelona, Spain.

He enjoyed a spectacular start there, not only keeping up his virtual goal-per-game scoring record, but also doing so in style.

A typical Ronaldo goal in those first matches with the Catalans involved picking the ball up somewhere near the center circle, running at the opposing defense at terrifying speed and, after struggling off a series of attempts to scythe him down, slotting the ball



"Il fenomeno" has proved once again he can adapt to a new league and new opponents and score goals on virtually any soccer stage.

At the same time he shuns the limelight with characteristic gentleness and diplomacy.

"I don't understand all this sudden amazement," he said when asked about the media attention he has received in Italy. "I was already good when I was just 16—poor but good nevertheless. I just got on with my work and try to do it the best I can."

"I'm lucky in that I've chosen a great squad, and not just because of the quality of the players. They help me and I help them. I'm happy with my teammates both at Inter and Brazil."

The one stage on which Ronaldo has yet to prove himself is the World Cup.

He was a member of the Brazil squad that won the tournament in the United States in 1994 but, at 17, he did not get a game, something he cites as his greatest disappointment to date.

The other item still missing in the Ronaldo trophy room is a league championship medal.

He has a Cup Winners' Cup medal from his season at Barcelona, a Copa America medal with Brazil and domestic cup winner's medals from three different countries—Brazil, the Netherlands and Spain.

But even with Ronaldo in their front line, PSV and Barcelona failed to win their respective championships and the Italian Scudetto remains his prime aim with Inter this season.

He faces a punishing schedule of matches over the coming months as both Inter and Brazil vie for his talents.

"Time is the one thing I don't have," he said. "I've thought of asking Father Christmas for more of it but I know time to be with my family, to see places, to relax with my friends. All that'll have to wait until I stop playing."

That may be every defender's wish but for now, the 21-year-old from Bento Ribeiro shows no sign of slowing up. ■

Confederations' Cup

Brazil capture King Fahd trophy



The Brazilian team after receiving the Cup

RIYADH—Ronaldo and Romario each scored hat-tricks as Brazil crushed 10-man Australia 6-0 to win the Confederations' Cup on Sunday.

Newly-crowned European Footballer of the Year Ronaldo made up for some limp performances earlier in the eight-nation tournament with a virtuoso performance, while 1994 World Cup winner Romario ended as the competition's top goalscorer to underline his claim for a place in the team for France 98.

The game was effectively decided in the 24th minute when Australian striker Mark Viduka was sent off for a wild challenge on Cafu. By then Brazil were already leading after an explosive start that saw Australian goalkeeper Mark Bosnich make four good saves in the opening 10 minutes before Ronaldo opened the floodgates in the 15th.

It was expertly created by Denilson, who cut down the wing before dragging the ball back for the striker to hit into the top of the net.

The pace of the Inter Milan man caught Australia off-guard for the second in the 28th minute as he stole between two defenders and tapped the ball past Bosnich, who appeared to think it was running wide.

Australian coach Terry Ven-



Ronaldo's headed pass for a 4-1

Ronaldo's third came five minutes later after an outstanding long-range pass from captain Dunga. He controlled on his chest and then hammered home on the half-volley.

The striker still had time to earn a yellow card for handball, a decision that brought a wide grin to the face of the Thai official, Pirom Unprasert.

Romario's treble was completed from the penalty spot in the 74th minute after Bosnich brought down Ronaldo at the end of a typical scything run.

The six-goal triumph came just a week after Australia had held the Brazilians to a goalless draw in a group match at the same venue. ■